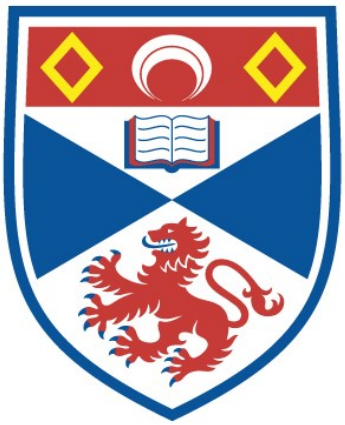
THE GOOD SHEPHERD THEME IN EARLY CHRISTIAN ART AND LITERATURE

Lester Lee Bundy

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
at the
University of St Andrews



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Thesis presented for the Degree Master of Philosophy in Divinity in the University of St. Andrews, June 1980.

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I declare that I have undertaken the research for this Thesis myself, and that the work of which it is a record has not been previously submitted for a degree. I was admitted as a candidate for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Divinity under Resolution of the University Court No. 3, 1970, with effect from 1st October, 1979.

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I certify that Lester L. Bundy has fulfilled the conditions of the Regulations and Resolution of the University Court No. 3, 1970, and that the candidate is qualified to submit this Thesis in application for the degree Master of Philosophy in Divinity.

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AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM

et ad Susannam

"Si linguis hominum loquar, et angelorum, caritatem autem non habeam, factus sum velut aes sonans, aut cymbalum tinniens."

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INTRODUCTION

This study is an exploration of the figure of Jesus Christ as Good Shepherd in Patristic literature and early Christian art of the first four and one-half centuries. A major focus of this study is the question of unity or continuity within the imagery of both early Christian art and Patristic literature. There is a question also of the general meaning of the symbolism associated with the figures in both genres. Always allowing for the possibility of individual interpretation, one still might ask if there is not some generally recognized unity in meaning appropriate to this imagery? If there is some unity in meaning, does it apply unilaterally or is such meaning as is associated with the visual arts imagery similarly associated with Patristic literary imagery? Finally, one might ask what relationship exists between the use of pagan imagery and the propogation of the Christian Gospel. How could pagan imagery be so quickly and so extensively adopted for Christian use? These questions serve as the basic thrust for this study.

The antique, or early period of Christian art extends roughly from the beginning of the second century A.D. to the middle of the fifth century A.D., and includes Shepherd imagery which runs the gamit from the Good Shepherd paintings in the catacombs of Domitilla and Priscilla to the famous mosaic of Galla Placidia in Ravenna.

The same time period roughly corresponds to a period in Patristic writing which sees great and significant development in Christian belief and worship. Obviously it was not

possible to examine all of the Patristic writing from this era, thus a decision was made to include those major authors that seem to be most representative of mainstream Christian views, or (as in the case of Tertullian and Origen) who have made major and significant contributions to Christian thought.

I

THE GOOD SHEPHERD IN THE MEDITERRANEAN CULTURE OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN ERA

Καὶ ἐξελθὼν εἶδεν πολὺν ὄχλον, καὶ ἐσπλαγχνίσθη ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ὅτι ἦσαν ὡς πρόβατα μὴ ἔχοντα ποιμένα, καὶ ἤρξατο διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς πολλά. Mark 6:34

The use of shepherd imagery in the New Testament is not surprising, given the eastern Mediterranean world of the first century. The basic necessities of existence were undeniably interwoven with the keeping of sheep, for sheep were a major source of food, clothing and the very essentials of life. It is natural therefore, that sheep and shepherds should figure significantly in the religious imagery of this part of the world. As early as the sixth century B.C. figures of the Shepherd can be found in the religious art of eastern Mediterranean cultures. The bronze statue of a young man carrying a sheep in the Heraklion Museum of Crete, dating from about the sixth century B.C., does not differ markedly from religious imagery that will become a standard part of Christian iconography several hundred years later.[1] One of the earliest marble statues in the Acropolis is the Calf-bearer or Moscophoros which portrays a young man — a shepherd figure — bearing a calf on his shoulders. It is clearly part of the same ethos as the Heraklion bronze.

Shepherd-gods are important figures in the pre-Christian religions of several of the major civilizations of the eastern Mediterranean, including Anubis in Egypt; Attis in

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1. Alexander Liberman, Greece Gods and Art (London, Collins, 1968) p. 19.

Phrygia; Paris, Tammuz, and Marduk in Babylonia; Hermes and Apollo in Greece; and Yahweh in Israel. In many instances gods and heroes are "found" or "raised" by shepherds, including Zeus, Romulus, Cyrus and Mithra. Among the Nomadic people of Palestine the chief shepherd becomes the priest-king as seen in David, Mesha the king of Moab, Moses and others. Sheep bearing pagan gods include Pan, Hermes, Endymion, and Aristeus.[2] The shepherd is sometimes associated with divine wisdom: for example the Oracle of Delphi was first heard by shepherds, and the oracular head of Orpheus was found by a shepherd. It is also notable that the nativity of Christ was witnessed by shepherds.

Specific Examples of Shepherd Figures as "Spiritual Keepers" of the "Earthly Flock"

Sometimes Apollo was portrayed as the shepherd Apollo Nomius, whose mission it was to protect the flocks. Apollo Nomius may in turn be linked to Apollo Carneios, the ram-god of the Dorians and a pastoral deity.[3]

In the era of the first century the figure of the shepherd Orpheus is perhaps the most frequently portrayed pagan shepherd figure. Orpheus is significant for early Christian art because he symbolizes a particular emphasis in pagan culture especially amenable to the Christian Gospel. With the figure of the shepherd Orpheus, the attribute "good" becomes particularly appropriate. The Orphic Good Shepherd figure differs from other pagan Shepherd figures, in that there is

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2. Ad deVries, Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery (Amsterdam-London, North Holland Pub. Co. 1974) p. 419.

3. Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology, (London, Batchworth Press Ltd. 1959) p. 121.

inherent in the mythology of Orpheus a ὁσιότης, a sanctity or holiness not associated with other shepherd-gods. This manifests itself in a concern for the well-being of creation, the sanctification of mankind, a sublimation of self to the Greater Good and in a special sense, a tendency towards monotheism.[4] The true significance of Orpheus can only be seen, as Harrison says, in the recognition of his humanity. Early Orphic religion functions as a reformation movement within paganism which, at its best, attempts to liberate man from the extremes of Dionysian excess and to raise him to higher realms. A major concern of the Orphic religion was the attainment of divine life through perfect purity. Harrison says Orpheus brought a "...new spiritual faith which brought to man at the moment he most needed it, the longing for purity and peace in this life, the hope for final fruition in the next."[5] Orpheus serves as a pagan savior figure, for in his life and teachings mankind saw hope for sanctity and divine immortality. According to Harrison, his death became almost a sacrificial death.[6] For early Christians, Orpheus became a natural linking figure between paganism and the teachings of Christianity. Clement of Alexandria, to cite one example, sees in the Orphic mysteries a prefigurement of the Christian Gospel.[7]

The figure of the shepherd is prominent in the Old

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4. Jane Ellen Harrison, Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion (Cambridge, University Press 1903) p. 456.

5. Ibid. p. 474.

6. Ibid. p. 463.

7. R. B. Tollington, Clement of Alexandria, Vol. I (London, Williams & Norgate 1914) p. 172.

Testament as well. Beginning as a nomadic society the Israelites found great significance in pastoral imagery.[8] Several major characters in the Old Testament were shepherds, including Rachel, Jacob, Moses and David. God Himself is envisioned as the Great Shepherd gathering and leading his people as sheep in such Old Testament references as Psalm 23, Zephanian 3:18 and Isaiah 40:11. In Isaiah 53:6 the image of the people of Israel as strayed sheep is linked with the promise of a Messiah who will restore Israel to her rightful place. The image of the suffering servant also is seen in this chapter, and the two figures are interwoven. The theme of the shepherd who cares for his flock, even to the point of sacrificing himself for them, was readily adopted by the early Christians as a model representative of the life of Jesus.

Some authorities have suggested a Jewish origin for the Christian paintings and sculptures of the Good Shepherd in the early Christian era. Examples of Jewish religious art in this era do exist, and they range from the mid-third century wall paintings of the Dura-Europos Synagogue, to the mosaic floor panels in the sixth century synagogue of Beth Alpha.[9] Nevertheless, it must be noted that while literary figures of the Good Shepherd can be found in the Old Testament, there does not seem to be an abundance of Good Shepherd figures in Jewish synagogue art. Murry has indicated that the bulk of evidence shows that Good Shepherd figures in Christian art derive their visual form from pagan art,

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8. Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, ed. Issac Landman, Vol. 9, (New York, Universal Jewish Encyclopedia Co., 1948) p. 503.

9. Avram Kampf, Contemporary Synagogue Art, (New York, Union of American Congregations 1966) p. 7.

especially the Orphic influence.[10] Patristic literary use of the figure of the Good Shepherd, on the other hand, derives primarily from Jewish literary efforts.

The Christian Good Shepherd is a figure of the Messianic hope fulfilled. Early Christians readily saw in the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth the fulfillment so long expected by the Jews. Coming from a pagan tradition they recognized Jesus as the embodiment of the Orphic tradition of Purity. The Good Shepherd was a figure that had great significance for both groups. As diverse as the Jews and the pagans were, the figure of the Good Shepherd could serve as a unifying theme — something greatly to be desired in the very early days of the Church.

Perhaps the most well known New Testament figures of the Good Shepherd are found in the 15th chapter of the Gospel of Luke and the 10th chapter of the Gospel of John. Luke gives the famous parable of the Good Shepherd:

> What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them doth not leave the ninety and nine in the widerness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 11

In the Gospel of John, Christ gives an extended discourse on his role as Shepherd which comes to serve as a major source for both the literary and visual arts imagery:

> I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my

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10. Sr. Charles Murry, "The Christian Orpheus", Cahiers Archéoligiques No. XXVI, 1977.

11. Luke 15:4-5 (English Biblical Quotes in this paper are taken from the Authorized Version. Greek and Latin refences are taken from Novi Testamenti Biblia Graeca et Latina, ed. Joseph Brewer S.J. (Barcelona, 1943).

life for the sheep. 12

The entire tenth chapter of John is in fact a theological statement of the nature of Jesus as the Christ, built around the figure of the Good Shepherd and linked with the Divine Shepherd imagery of the Old Testament. This is an early expression of the way the Church would come to view the life and work of Christ based on his teaching and ministry. So it was that in the early days of the Christian movement, the figure of the Good Shepherd held great significance for Christians from both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds. There are in fact eighteen references to shepherds in the New Testament, ten of which are in the tenth chapter of John. There are forty references to sheep in the New Testament, fourteen of which are in the tenth chapter of John. In the Gospel according to Matthew (7:15) there is the interesting figure of the false sheep as well. Shepherd-sheep imagery clearly was very meaningful to a wide range of people in the early Christian era and had special significance to the early Church.

Examples of Visual Representations of the Good Shepherd in the Third and Fourth Century

Pagan examples of the shepherd figure almost invariably portray the shepherd standing with a sheep or ram over his shoulder in the pose generally known by the term criophore. In pre-Christian art this image is generally understood to be symbolic of sheep being brought for sacrifice.[13] The statue Moscophoros in Athens is a variant on this theme,

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12. John 10:14, 15.

13. Alexander Liberman, Greece Gods and Art (London, Collins 1968) p. 19.

and may be intended as an image of the donor offering a sacrifice at one of the altars of the Acropolis.[14] The sacrifice of sheep in petition or as a votive offering is very ancient. For example Castor and Polydeuces are induced to rescue sailors after the sacrifice of a white lamb. In Dionysiac rites lambs were offered as a sacrifice to underworld deities for the release of Dionysus.[15] Generally white lambs were offered to heavenly deities and black lambs to the gods of the underworld.

Gradually there seems to be a shift in the image of the shepherd from one who brings the lamb for sacrifice, to one who saves the lamb, a keeper and protector of the flock. The Apollo Nomius figure has such a role. In Apollo's role as shepherd he is also a musician-god whose attributes are the bow and quiver, the shepherd's crook, and the lyre. Although usually portrayed nude, Apollo is often shown clothed in a long tunic when portrayed as a musician.[16]

With the Orphic emphasis on purity and on the attainment of divine immortality, the Orpheus shepherd figure exemplifies a tradition of shepherd-savior. As with shepherd figures of Apollo, the Orphic-shepherd is associated with music and often is shown, as in the late 4th century Bobbio pyx, charming wild animals with his music.[17] The Orpheus image is generally one of idyllic peace and tranquillity.

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14. Ibid. p. 36.

15. Ad deVries, Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery (London, North Holland Pub. Co., 1974) p. 419.

16. Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology (London, Batchworth Press Ltd. 1959) p. 121.

17. Michael Gough, Origins of Christian Art (London, Thames & Hudson 1973) p. 124.

The pastoral scene evokes feelings of God's beneficence and a protective governance by the Shepherd. As can be seen, this imagery is quite compatible with the early Christian understandings of Christ.

A fourth century reference to an image of Christ in connection with an image of Orpheus, is found in the Historia Augusta where the practice of the emperor Severus Alexander is supposedly described. The emperor is reported to have worshipped daily in the sanctuary of his Lares where he had images of a number of gods, and where were included images of Christ, Abraham and Orpheus.[18] The oldest visual portrayals of Christ extant today are Good Shepherd figures in the Roman catacombs, on sarcophagi, and in the baptismal room of the church-house at Dura-Europos.[19] Unfortunately, very little Christian art exists today that was done before the beginning of the third century.

Generally speaking Christ is portrayed in the third century, whether in relief sculpture, on sarcophagi, or in fresco paintings, as a graceful man of fifteen to twenty years of age, beardless with a gentle expression. As Didron says, he is "resplendent with divine youth, just as Apollo was figured by the pagans, and as angels are drawn by Christians".[20] One of the oldest examples of Christ the Good

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18. Aelius Lampridius, "Scriptores Historiae Augustae: Severus Alexander" Chpt. XXIX, Loeb Classical Library (New York, G.P. Putnam & Sons 1922). This fourth century account of a supposed much earlier occurrence shows the importance to some writers of linking the image of Christ to pagan practice.

19. J. Kollwitz, "Christus, Christusbild", Lexikon der Christlichen Ikonographie, ed. Kirschbaum (Freiberg, Herder 1968) p. 357.

20. A.N. Didron, Christian Iconography (New York, Frederick Ungar Pub. Co., republished 1965 from 1851 edition) p. 249.

Shepherd is in the catacombs of S. Priscilla dating from the early third century. In this fresco painting the Good Shepherd is unbearded, carrying a sheep over his shoulders. The sheep's feet are held together with one hand. He wears a short tunic with vertical stripes, and a bag is carried by a strap from his shoulder. His free hand is held out and down. The composition of the painting is symmetrical, the figure being flanked on each side by sheep, trees, and birds.[21] Another early 3rd century example is the catacomb of S.S. Pietro and Marcellino in Rome where a similar youthful figure in an almost identical pose is again flanked by sheep and trees.[22] Dating from about the year 220 the Good Shepherd in the ceiling of the crypt of Lucina is especially notable in its similarity to classical pagan sculpture.[23]

Christian sarcophagi from the early third century contain relief sculpture similar in style and iconographic detail to the early frescoes. As Grabar has pointed out the reliefs are "unobtrusive and limited to the purely allegorical figure of the Orant, along with the Good Shepherd.[24] Prior to the reign of Constantine the subject matter on Christian sarcophagi treats very few subjects, virtually all of them drawn from the Bible. The Good Shepherd is one of the most frequent figures used to portray Christ.

The so-called Chapel of the Sacraments and the underground tomb Via Latina are examples of the use of the Shep-

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21. Kollwitz, "Christus" p. 362.

22. Gough, Origins of Christian Art p. 21.

23. Pierre du Bourguet, Early Christian Art (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson 1972) p. 75.

24. Andre Grabar, Beginnings of Christian Art (London, Thames & Hudson 1967) p. 130.

herd motif in early Christian painting, sometimes mixed with what appears to be primarily pagan art.[25] In the "ancient chamber" ceiling of the cemetery of Domitilla in Rome there is a third century Good Shepherd — Orpheus figure in the standard pose with what appears to be a flute or syrinx in his hand.[26] In Northern Syria, an early third century painting of the Good Shepherd can be found in what was apparently the baptistry of the church-house at Dura-Europos.[27] Although some authors have attempted to show that the Dura-Europos Good Shepherd comes from a Jewish visual arts tradition, the validity of this argument is debatable.[28]

Although the unbearded youthful figure predominates in early Christian images of the Shepherd, it is by no means exclusive. There is an occasional blending and merging of styles and forms. The Reading Shepherd and His Flock in the hypogeum of the Aurelii, Rome, shows a bearded Shepherd in a long tunic, seated, reading from a scroll.[29] The figure virtually seems to "float" above an assortment of sheep in a vague pastoral setting. This seated, bearded figure is reminiscent of the Philosopher figure, another "borrowing" from classical art, which portrays Jesus as the source of Wisdom and Good or True Teaching. This painting may well be a part of the beginning of a tendency to combine the Philosopher figure with the Shepherd figure of Christ: a blending of these attributes into one figure.

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25. Ibid. p. 225.

26. du Bourguet, Early Ch. Art p. 10.

27. Ibid. p. 66.

28. Murry, "The Christian Orpheus", p. 26.

29. du Bourguet, Early Ch. Art p. 41.

By the mid-third century one can begin to see a development in the image of the Good Shepherd that will continue until the figure eventually undergoes a complete shift in emphasis. As has been stated, the early Good Shepherd figure tends to be a youthful, unbearded classical style figure reminiscent of images of Apollo and Orpheus. In the mid-third century however, one finds images of the Good Shepherd in entirely new settings. A marble statuette now held in the Cleveland Museum, dating from the second half of the third century, has a Christian adaptation of a rather regal style and pose (the use of free-standing three dimensional sculpture is in itself somewhat unusual for Christian art of this period). This is very similar in style to the sculptured head of Alexander the Great, housed in the same museum. In this piece one might very well see the beginnings of a move from the image of the Good Shepherd to an image of a "Good Sovereign".[30] About the year 240 one can see definite changes in styles of painting with greater freedom of composition and more expressionistic qualities beginning to be evident.

Three general tendencies in the Christian art of the first half of the third century have been identified by du Bourguet. The first two are more or less interwoven. They include a continuation of classical art, which combines realism with nobility and a Hellenistic tradition which is decorative, but elegant and refined. The third tendency is of Oriental inspiration and includes a more extensive use of symbolism, frontality, pathos in expression and simplicity

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30. Ibid. p. 118.

of line.[31] Rice also identifies similar tendencies in early Christian art, although his terminology is a bit different.[32] As was pointed out, the works of the second half of the third century mark the beginnings of a movement away from the classical model. This is evidenced in the Reading Shepherd, and in the Mosaic of Christ as the Sun God in the Roman cemetery under St. Peter's.[33] As the third century yields to the fourth there is a general tendency to reflect what both du Bourguet and Rice describe as an Eastern or Oriental mysticism. Rice states that this expressionistic tendency was encouraged by the writings of the early Christian Fathers who emphasized the mystical aspects of Christianity.[34]

The Eastern mystical influence noted by du Bourguet and Rice can be traced back to the influence of oriental mystery cults which became popular among the Greeks, and later among the Romans. Gradually the symbolic began to dominate over the natural in religious art. Philosophic thought began to reject the domination of Greek classicism. In the visual arts, the visual symbol became an intermediary for the invisible world of spirit.[35] This eastern mystical or expressionist style, which will become prominant in Christian art, is exemplified by The Sacrifice of Conon, a pagan painting of the third century from Dura-Europos in Syria.

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31. Ibid. p. 82.

32. D. Talbot Rice, The Beginnings of Christian Art (London, Hodder & Stoughton 1957).

33. Grabar, Beginnings. p. 80.

34. Rice, Beginnings of Ch. Art p. 37.

35. du Bourguet, Early Christian Art p. 22.

In this painting a powerfully mystical aura is created by severe frontality and a deliberate two dimensional style.[36]

The evolution of style and form in art never flows smoothly, but rather progresses in fits and jerks. Under Diocletian there had been an attempt to revivify classical paganism. Supposedly to revive lagging morality and general morale, as well as to combat the influx of suspiciously un-Roman mystery religions, Diocletian had attempted to stimulate involvement in the traditional Graeco-Roman pantheon of gods and to enliven interest in classical studies and traditions. As is often the case this attempt to reach back into the past was doomed to failure, although in some segments of upper class pagan Roman society this tendency would continue on well into the fourth century. The dominant movement of Graeco-Roman society, however would take another direction.

With the rise of Constantine there came to be a greater emphasis on New Testament themes. The tendency probably is the result of more than one single factor. The early Church developed its various themes over a period of several generations. Because the Church was a living, growing entity, development and change was inevitable. One facet of this developmental change was a gradual shift to more emphasis on written accounts of the Gospel and to more use of New Testament literary material. This in turn would foster a greater use of New Testament themes in the visual arts. Prior to the beginning of the fourth century these themes simply had not had time to develop more fully. It seems likely that the rise of Constantine facilitated this development, as the

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36. Gough, Origins. p. 16.

Church was now able to function more openly and freely.

One begins to see a greater prominence of Philosopher and Orant figures, showing a shift from salvation themes such as the Good Shepherd to themes which typify the role of the Church as Mediator (Orant) and Christ as Teacher (Philosopher).[37] In the early fourth century there comes to be a greater interest in figurines and statuettes than there has previously been. However, the familiar figure of the Good Shepherd is still a frequent subject, usually modeled in the traditional manner, derived from the criophore, the ram bearing shepherd of paganism.[38]

Painting, by virtue of its nature tending to be more abstract than sculpture, continues the trend to merge and evolve new images. In the first half of the fourth century the Traditio Legis in the Mausoleum of Constantia shows Christ between two figures delivering the Law. Beneath his feet are four sheep, evocative of the figure of the Good Shepherd. Dressed now in long tunic and with long hair, the youthful Shepherd merges into a more mature Christ in Majesty. From this point on, Christ has a human quality. Christian art becomes narrative and deals with the events of his life.[39]

As the figure of Christ evolves from a fairly simple, classical shepherd into a more sophisticated and complex figure, the symbolic role of his sheep also is in the process of modification, and development. In the more or less classical figure of the Good Shepherd, as in its pagan

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37. du Bourguet, Early Christian Art. p. 104.

38. Ibid. p. 114.

39. Ibid. p. 174.

antecedents, the sheep were vague symbols of the community of followers. In the fourth century the sheep become more directly symbolic of the martyrs or of the Church itself. The middle fourth century Suzanna as a Ewe-Lamb Between Two Wolves in the Arcosolium of Celerina is an interesting example of this tendency.[40] The image of Suzanna is used both by Hippolytus of Rome and by Cyprian as an image of the Church in her struggle against oppressive elements.[41] Throughout the history of Christian art there is a struggle, a constant tension between mythical or allegorical representations and naturalism. This is no less true in the fourth century.[42] In part a rejection of earlier classicalism — in part a result of the now public preaching and proclamation of the life of Christ, the tendency to narrative portrayal with an emphasis on the historic reality of the life of Jesus becomes a dominant theme in the mid-fourth century. Mythical figures continue to occur however, often juxtaposed with naturalistic figures both of Christ and the saints.[43]

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40. Ibid. p. 159.

41. Hippolytus, Fragments From Commentaries on Various Books of Scripture: On Susannah: Ver. 7, Ante-Nicene Christian Library Vol. VI, Roberts & Donaldson, (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark 1868) p. 478; Cyprian, (attributed) On the Discipline of Chastity: Chpt. 9, Ante-Nicene Christian Library Vol. XIII, p. 259.

42. This is not to say, however, that naturalistic or realistic painting cannot have a mystical as well as an abstract quality, as will be seen in later Byzantine paintings and mosaics.

43. This struggle will continue in varied form into the twentieth century. An interesting facet of the struggle directly related to the use of pastoral imagery is the decree of the Quini Sextum Council under the Emperor Justinian II in 692. The council decreed that in the future the historic figure of Jesus Christ which is the "human countenance of the Son of God" should be shown in place of the image of the Sacred Lamb. See A.N. Didron, Christian Iconography Vol. I, p. 332.

As the fourth century progresses the Good Shepherd figure becomes more animated, assuming the attributes and poses of a real shepherd. At this point on sarcophagi, for example, he can be seen seated, leaning on a staff, milking a ewe, or even sleeping beneath a tree. One example taken from the latter half of the fourth century is the ivory reliquary in the Brescia Municipal Museum. Here the Good Shepherd is found standing in an arched doorway, as on guard, with the sheep shown behind a high stone wall. A wolf or dog rises up toward Christ and he appears to address it.[44] In this carving the figure of the Shepherd in the door of the sheep-fold clearly recollects the imagery of the Gospel of John. Symbolically the sheep-fold becomes the Kingdom of God and Christ becomes the Door-Keeper.

According to du Bourguet, by mid-fourth century "Mythological ornamentation was progressively eliminated".[45] On the other hand, there are occasional classical resurgences. The "new style" emphasizing the reality of the Gospel stories seems not wholly palatable in some quarters. The Lateran Museum Sarcophogus 128 includes a Good Shepherd more reminiscent of the earlier third century in style and execution, but juxtaposed with features that smack of paganism, — winged genii with baskets of fruit and female musicians.[46] A similar tendency is also found in the work of the Brescia craftsmen.[47] This mixture of pagan and Christian themes may be evidence of a tendency on the part of some people to re-

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44. du Bourguet, Early Christian Art p. 177.

45. Ibid. p. 176.

46. Grabar, Beginnings. p. 240.

47. Ibid. p. 272.

tain some vestige of pagan belief even though nominally Christian. The commercial nature of sarcophagi construction will also enter into this phenomenon, as will be discussed in Chapter III.

Toward the end of the fourth century the tension between mystical and naturalistic representations continues. An interesting combination of these tendencies is seen in the painting of Christ in the cemetery of S.S. Peter and Marcellinus in Rome. One sees what is becoming the traditional figure of Christ, bearded with long hair and full length tunic, seated between Peter and Paul. Directly below the seated Christ is the Sacred Lamb with cruciform nimbus (a symbol reserved for Christ only). Peter and Paul each hold out their hands as if to present Christ to the viewer. Four other saints beside the Sacred Lamb gesture in the same way toward this abstract symbol of Christ.[48]

An Apparent Paradox

The material presented thus far shows that from shortly after the start of the third century on, there is a body of specifically Christian art, much of which is directly "borrowed" from pagan religious art. One of the principal figures used by Christians, and adapted from paganism is the figure of the Good Shepherd. Literary references in the Old and New Testaments apparently predate the Christian use of the visual arts in general, and the visual portrayal of the Good Shepherd in particular.

It is a generally accepted historical tenet that the early Christian Church was hostile to pagan religion. One

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48. du Bourguet, Early Christian Art p. 171.

might, therefore, raise the question as to how the early Church with its hostility to pagan religion could from the very beginning of its visual arts tradition, countenance figures obviously "borrowed" from pagan imagery. How could the Church allow obviously pagan themes to be so prominently displayed in such places as Christian tombs, or in a Church-house as in Dura-Europos? One might theorize that early Christian art was totally separated and independent from the Church, yet there is a uniformity and a continuity that seems to suggest otherwise. This apparent paradox will be one of the primary areas of concern in the following chapters.

II

THE GOOD SHEPHERD FIGURE IN APOLOGETICAL AND CATECHETICAL USE

λέγει αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον Σίμων Ἰωάννου, φιλεῖς με; ἐλυπήθη ὁ Πέτρος ὅτι εἶπεν αὐτῷ τὸ τρίτον· φιλεῖς με; καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ Κύριε, πάντα σὺ οἶδας, σὺ γινώσκεις ὅτι φιλῶ σε· λέγει αὐτῷ [ὁ Ἰησοῦς] βόσκε τὰ πρόβατά μου.
John 21:17

The use of pagan themes in early Christian art and the anti-pagan stance of the Church, seemingly a paradoxical situation, should be seen in light of a commitment to world conversion. There are several facets to this phenomenon that have specific implications for Good Shepherd imagery. The fact that early on the Church sought to broaden its appeal to include the Gentiles as well as the Jews, is one of these facets. Jewish-Gentile tensions played a major role in shaping the early Church. Inherent in these tensions was an expanding and developing concept of the work and nature of Christ. Increasingly, the figure of the Good Shepherd came to play a role in Christological expression.

Jesus, a Jew both racially and culturally, functioned more or less within the normal framework of first century Judean society. Based on the principle that God's plan for the eventual salvation and redemption of mankind centered in the revelation of God to the Jewish people, Jesus' teaching and ministry was primarily aimed at the Judean Jews. In the episode of the sending out of the twelve in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus specifically prohibited the disciples from approaching the Gentiles.[1]

Nevertheless, the New Testament does occasionally por-

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1. Matt. 10:5-6

tray Jesus in contact with non-Jews. For example there is the story of Jesus' encounter with the woman of Samaria, the headling of the centurion's servant,[2] and the Canaanite woman's daughter.[3] Jesus openly conversed with a variety of Jews who were by orthodox standards inferior people: tax collectors and publicans. The freedom with which Jesus moved in all levels of society, the way he freely entered into dialogue with all manner of people, even women and Gentiles, made Jesus a controversial figure in his own lifetime. The scandal of ministry to non-Jews was to shortly become a major controversy for the fledgling Church. The nature of Jewish-Gentile relations during this era is significant for this relationship had a major effect on the development of early Christian shepherd imagery.

Jewish-Gentile Relations in the Early Christian Era

Two strands of tradition were contained in first century Judaism. The first strand was the traditional cult associated with the Jerusalem Temple, the second was what Sandmel has called Synagogue Judaism.[4]

Synagogue Judaism was the dominant feature in Jewish culture as it existed throughout the empire. In this period of time Jews living outside of Judea outnumbered those living in Judea five or perhaps even ten to one.[5] Because Synagogue Judaism was characterized by an intellectual or philo-

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2. Luke 7:1-10, Matt. 8:5-13.

3. Matt. 15:21-28.

4. Cf. Samuel Sandmel, Judaism and Christian Beginnings (New York, Oxford Press, 1978) Passim.

5. Ibid. p. 17.

sophic demeanor, it had more appeal to some of the more sophisticated elements of pagan society than Temple Judaism, which remained more isolated, both physically and spiritually from the rest of the world.

Wilson has pointed out that the character of Judaism in this age is debatable.[6] He suggests that there is less syncretism in Judaism at this point than some would suggest. The general tendency seems not to make an amalgam of pagan and Jewish belief, but rather to extol Judaism as an equal if not superior religion.

> This is most evident in Philo, who for all his Greek culture and philosophy is quite certainly intent on making Judaism intellectually respectable in the eyes of the contemporary world. 7

There was certainly a continuing dialogue between the Jews and the Greek-speaking Gentiles, nevertheless. Philo of Alexandria contended that all that was worthy in the Gentile world, including the philosophy of Plato, was contained originally in Judaism. The continued dialogue between Jews and Gentiles was evidently extensively aided by the fact that not only were there large numbers of Jews living in the major Greek-speaking Gentile cities, but also there were large numbers of Gentiles in the major cities of Judea.

Due to the dispersion first century Judaism had an international flavor. This cosmopolitan form of Judaism could allow for a fairly high degree of interaction with Gentiles, and for a certain amount of assimilation of Gentile culture,[8] even to the decoration of synagogues with

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6. R. McL. Wilson, "Gnostic Origins", Vigiliae Christianae, Vol. IX., 1955, p. 209.

7. Ibid.

8. Kampf, Contemporary Synagogue Art, p. 14.

paintings and mosaics adopted and modified from other cultures.

For both the Jews and the Gentiles the first century was an unsettled time in many respects. It was a time of change, politically and socially. Traditional pagan religion no longer answered the needs of the Graeco-Roman world. The craving for some means of stability, a "salvation" from the instabilities of the era, manifest itself in a variety of ways. The Stoics and Neo-Platonists sought stability in philosophy, the Gnostics sought it in secret knowledge, while the masses sought it in oriental mystery religions.[9]

A variety of circumstances combined to make conditions right for mystery religions to flourish. Perhaps it is not possible to fully understand the intricacies of this era. As Wilson has pointed out, we cannot know for certain what conditions were really like.

> Our knowledge of the Hellenistic world is at many points defective. We cannot say with certainty what were the methods by which the Mystery Religions were propogated, or what were the possibilities for men to gain acquaintance with the religious ideas of other nations. 10

Although initially very popular, the mystery religions did not prove to be effective long term solutions. The Atavism and primitive naturalism which characterized much of this movement eventually proved repellent, as did the pseudo-science of magic and astrology. For the better educated Greek-speaking Gentiles the vague and ill defined theology of the mystery religions was totally inadequate.

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9. Samuel Angus, The Mystery Religions and Christianity (London, John Murry, 1925) p. 227.

10. Wilson, "Gnostic Origins" p. 211.

Judaism proved to be ultimately more successful in appealing to the Graeco-Roman world, for it met many of this societies needs, without having all the shortcomings of the mystery religions. About the first century it seems evident that a fairly large number of people converted to Judaism. The appeal of Judaism seemed to center on several factors. First, the Jews presented the best possible view of their faith to the pagans, attempting whenever possible to relate Judaism to the higher forms of pagan thought, philosophy and ethics. Second, the Jews pursued the practical aim of securing a moral and happy life. And finally, Judaism allowed for the individual to find release from the guilt of sin, and provided the promise of sanctification.[11]

The question might be raised as to why all pagans did not convert to Judaism. The answer is that some did, perhaps many in the first century era, but there were problems as well. The requirement of a fairly complete renunciation of Gentile culture and social practice tended to discourage Gentiles from the ultimate step of conversion.[12]

It is clear that there was at least a segment of the Gentile community that was seriously interested in Judaism and that the thinking of Jews and Gentiles were effected each one by the other. It was among these people that Christianity would flourish and in this situation that the Shepherd would come into prominence. Attention is now focused on the beginnings of the Christian movement within this

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11. For an extensive discussion of Jewish and Gentile interaction see Emil Schürer's The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, G. Vermes, F. Millar & M. Black, Vol. I & II (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1979).

12. Angus, Mystery Rel. p. 27.

context.

The Advent of Christianity

Christianity was seen in its formative stage, even by many early Christians, as a sect of Judaism. Thus, Christianity's separation from Judaism was to be slow and sometimes painful. It was natural that pagan criticism of early Christianity would be essentially the same or very similar to pagan criticism of the Jews. Thus it is that the early Christians as well as the Jews were accused of gross superstition. Perhaps it should be pointed out that an abhorrance of superstition had characterized the more philosophical segments of Greek society from a fairly early date. For example, while recognizing and perhaps borrowing from the spiritual side of Orphism, Plato was scandalized by the popular interpretation and practice of Orphic religion which he considered to be degenerated from earlier higher ideals into a shameful superstition.[13]

As there were a wide variety of groups who claimed to follow the "authentic" teachings of Jesus in one sense or another, the popular view of Christianity as superstitious barbarism was often rather unfortunately reinforced. Some of the gnostic sects, for example, were terribly scandalous in their behavior. Misunderstandings and deliberate calumny resulted in rumors that Christians practiced cannibalism, incest and any number of other obnoxious acts. As a result early Christian apologists felt a need to make Chris-

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13. James Adam, The Religious Teachers of Greece (Aberdeen, Univ. Press, 1908) p. 103.

tianity appear more respectable.[14] Both Jews and Christians worked hard to overcome the image of superstition.

Following the Jewish lead, Christians attempted to present a dignified and respectable appearance in worship and practice. The first apologists attempted to show Christianity as a philosophy on an equal level with the highest forms of Greek thought.

Walzer tells us that Galen is perhaps the first pagan author to specifically refer to Christianity as being more or less on an equal footing with Greek Philosophy.[15] In this second century era several references can be found relating Christianity to philosophy, however, many pagans were sceptical. Porphyry, for example, in his work Against Christians reacts to attempts to legitimize Christianity as a philosophy by denouncing the blind faith of Christians who do not subject their beliefs to the scrutiny of true philosophical examination.[16]

What probably affected the popular view of Christianity as much as anything was the deportment of Christians as viewed by the pagans over the span of the early centuries. Both Christian and Jewish religious leaders and teachers offered guidance in the conduct of one's life and presented a scheme for understanding the universe in such a way as to be very different from the leaders and teachers of pagan religions. The contrast between the pagan cultic priests

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14. Robert L. Wilken, "Collegia, Philosophical Schools and Theology" in Early Church History, ed. S. Benko & J. O'Rourke (London, Oliphants, 1972) p. 270.

15. Richard Walzer, Galen on Jews and Christians (London, Oxford Press, 1949) p. 44.

16. Ibid. p. 54.

and the Christian and Jewish leaders did much to raise the popular estimation of both Christianity and Judaism. Galen himself, saw that the common people who were not capable of following the loftier thought of philosophy, were changed by Christian and Jewish faith and became almost as noble as philosophers.[17] That the common people would not be abandoned to superstition, written off as a lost cause because they were unable to grasp the more intellectual aspects of the faith, was so unusual as to be notable in this era.

In first century Christianity there was much internal struggle over the way in which the "new" religion would take shape. The struggle was between those who wanted to require conversion to cultural Judaism, (that is circumcision and Mosaic Law, etc.) and those who wanted to accept Gentiles into Christianity without such requirements.

The acceptance of Gentile converts was of major significance. First of all for Christians it removed the barrier which had separated Jews and Gentiles from the time of Abraham. As was pointed out earlier, a sizable number of Gentiles were deeply committed to the theological principles of Judaism but could not see the necessity of "cultural conversion". These Gentiles, sometimes referred to as the "god-fearers", found just what they were seeking in Christianity, where they were welcome to full and equal participation without being required to make extreme cultural changes. In fact they joined the Church so readily that in a matter of a generation or two virtually all of the Church leaders would be

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17. Walzer, Galen. pp. 51 and 57.

Gentile Christians.

A theological consequence of the Jerusalem Council decision was of Christological significance as well. A special relationship between God and Israel first took form in the initial covenant between God and Abraham, the sign of which was Abraham's circumcision.[18]

The covenantal relationship, renewed from time to time, was an unbroken and vital relationship between God and His chosen people that was of the very essence of Jewish faith and practice. To alter this relationship by allowing the inclusion into the Church of uncircumicsed Gentiles, was to create an irreparable break with traditional Judaism. The only justification for such a momentous break was the belief that Jesus was in fact the embodiment of a totally and radically new covenant with God. The nature of that embodiment would, of course, exercise the mind of the Church from this point on. In the process of struggle to find meaning in these unprecedented events, Greek thought would have a profound influence on the developing theology of the Church. To quote Yerkes: "Christian Theology is the result of Greek speaking converts trying to justify and defend their faith and to express it in terms understood by Greek philosophers".[19] The figure of the Good Shepherd had direct application in the imagery associated with the "new" faith as will be shortly shown.

The Good Shepherd in New Testament writings is perhaps most familiar as seen in John's and Luke's Gospels. These

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18. Genesis 17:10-11.

19. Royden Yerkes, Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religion and Early Judaism, (London, Adam & Charles Black, 1953) p. 89.

are not the only examples of Good Shepherd imagery in the New Testament, however.

Christians often referred to Jesus as The Shepherd during the formative stages of the Church.

> For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. 20

This passage shows the figure of Christ as Shepherd gathering the Church under his spiritual protection. A further development of the Shepherd figure is found in the fifth chapter of I Peter, where the author exhorts the elders to follow the example of Christ and be Shepherds, feeding the flock and maintaining a high moral standard, so as to set a good example for the "sheep".

In the New Testament a total of eighteen references are distributed through the four Gospels, Hebrews, I Peter, and Revelation.[21]

Early Christian-Pagan Shepherd Imagery

It is safe to say that the figure of the Good Shepherd had significance for a wide variety of people in the early Christian era. Some of the earliest examples of Christian art are found together with what are clearly pagan monuments.

To cite one example of this phenomenon, in the tomb chamber of Trebius Justus the walls are adorned with descriptive paintings which Grabar describes thus: "Whatever the religious group to which Trebius Justus may have belonged, his fellow-believers had a Good Shepherd represented

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20. I Peter 2:25.

21. Nelson's Complete Concordance of the Revised Standard Version Bible (New York, Nelson & Sons, 1957).

in the vault of his tomb."[22] This tomb includes paintings that are mixed in theme and motif drawing both from pagan and Christian inspiration. The Good Shepherd figure in this case is ambiguous. A similar "mixed character" can be seen in the Tomb of the Aurelii and in the tomb of the Via Latina. The "mixed character" is somewhat typical of Roman society in general and will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

Examples of pagan themes used in early Christian art include: the peacock — which will symbolize for Christians the incorruptible flesh of the Resurrection; the dove — symbolic of Noah's deliverance and the Holy Spirit; the athlete's palm — symbolic of the martyr's triumph over death; the seasons personified — symbolic of abundance and the promise of renewed life; the vintage feast of Dionysos — symbolic of the metaphor of Christ as the vine and branch; and Helios and the sun chariot — symbolic of Christ's resurrection; to mention only some of the more obvious.[23] Perhaps the most widely used pagan theme is the subject of this discussion, the Good Shepherd drawn primarily from Orphic imagery.

On the earliest sarcophagi the Good Shepherd often appears in conjunction with another very significant figure drawn from pagan art, that of the Orant. The two are unified, serving as a combined theme of Christ and the Church. For the pagans the Good Shepherd signified philanthropy, drawing heavily on Orphic form and savior imagery as discussed in the first chapter. The Orant signified piety to

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22. Grabar, Beginnings. p. 221.

23. Gough, Origins of Christian Art, p. 78.

the pagans as a solemn supplication of the gods, usually by a female figure with upraised arms.[24] For Christians the Good Shepherd became a figure of Jesus, and the Orant became a figure of the Church herself.

Clearly the Good Shepherd was a significant figure in pagan art, and continued to be so in early Christian work. There is almost a "formula" approach used which seems to be taken directly from pagan usage as is noted by Grabar:

> Thus the pastoral theme of shepherds and their flocks in landscape settings so popular with the third century Christians had already figured on many pagan sarcophagi. On these again we find the characteristic decorative layout of a great many Christian sarcophagi: a central relief separated by strigils from two reliefs at the end of the coffin. The Christians kept to this conventional layout, changing only the themes of the reliefs. [25]

Figures of the Good Shepherd are for the most part placed in the position of greatest honor on sarcophogi, in the center, dominating the rest of the images. In paintings on the walls and the ceilings of tombs, the Good Shepherd is again located centrally.[26] For example, the sarcophagus from Via Salaria (no. 181 Lateran Museum) has a Good Shepherd and a female Orant in the principle place of honor. Grabar cites this monument as an excellent example of Christian use of these originally pagan figures.

> The central place on the front of the sarcophagus is occupied by the Good Shepherd and a female Orant, both of these figures retaining some of their original pagan significance: That of personifications of the philosophic

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24. A. Legner, "Hirt, Guter Hirt" Lexicon der Christlichen Ikonographie ed. Kirshbaum, (Freiberg, Herder K.G. 1968) p. 290.

25. Grabar, Beginnings. p. 127.

26. Didron, Christian Iconography p. 340.

concepts of Philanthropy and Piety. 27

Various Theories Explaining the Use of Pagan Imagery in Early Christian Art

It seems incredible that early Christian art should borrow so freely from pagan imagery. Much of the work of pagan painters and sculptors either pandered to the more superstitious elements of pagan society, or was of a decorative and commercial quality. It seems strange, therefore, that Christians would adopt it so readily. A variety of theories have been offered to explain this phenomenon. In order to better understand the use of the figure of the Good Shepherd, it is necessary to briefly explore its more significant examples.

One of the prevailing theories is that early Christian art functioned in a secret way with special double meanings and hidden significance, virtually serving as a "secret code" for members of the Church. This theory is based on the idea that the early Church was subject to persecution and attack by the pagan society within which it existed. In order to remain hidden from exposure and attack it was necessary for the Church to adopt practices that would not stand out and catch the attention of the pagans. Presumedly, if one felt the need to utilize the visual arts, as in tomb decoration, one had to do so surreptitiously. Gough, in his work on the origins of Christian art, has suggested that there was, more or less, an "official policy of trying to ensure survival by the avoidance of provocation". He contrasts this with the Montanists and others who seemed

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27. Grabar, Beginnings. p. 140.

to court notoriety. Extremists would go so far as to put on their tombstones, in open cemeteries, the slogan "Christians to Christians", sometimes even changing the Greek letter Chi from its "X" shape to an upright cross, as in: "†ριστιανοί".[28] Supposedly, most early Christians wanted to avoid notoriety and avoided symbols that would directly reflect their "secret" beliefs.

> So familiar is the shepherd in early Christian art that it is easy to loose sight of his pagan origin, yet in Greece the Hermes Criophorus (the ram-carrier) is known very early as a subject for sculpture, and his "adoption" by Christians would probably have passed unnoticed by pagan neighbors. 29

While this theory is interesting, and no doubt has some element of truth in it, it is inadequate as a total explanation of pagan themes in early Christian art, especially in regard to the Good Shepherd figure. The extensive use of pagan themes and their continuity seems to indicate a more profound use of these figures than that of mere camouflage. The "persecution theory" is further subject to question in light of the sporadic nature of anti-Christian activity on the part of the pagans. There are times prior to Constantine when the Church is openly tolerated, as during the reign of Severus Alexander. For the most part extensive persecutions on an empire wide scale do not occur until the mid-third century under Decius.

Another theory regarding early Christian art is that it was an expression of the poor and uneducated pagans who became Christians, and out of ignorance continued to use pagan

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28. Gough, Origins. p. 26.

29. Ibid. p. 78.

themes to express their religious feelings. However, as du Bourguet points out, one need only examine the monuments of early Christianity to see the fallacy in this idea. It is clear from the tombs, the existence of Church houses, and other remains that early Christian art cut through all levels of society, and therefore cannot be "dismissed solely as the work of poor ignorant classes".[30]

A more prevalent as well as a more substantial theory is that Christian art is a rather incidental accident or by-product of early Christianity. In this view early Christian art would be somewhat representative of early Christianity, but not directly controlled by Church leaders. Grabar says that while Christian art had its origin, or at least its sponsorship in the Christian community, "It is doubtful whether the clergy ever took any steps to control or standardize this early Christian sepulchral art".[31] Grabar admits to an indirect influence by the Church, noting a judicious choice of subjects, and a close connection between seasonal worship and imagery, which is consistent in widely separated geographic regions.[32] Grabar also notes that there seems to be a relationship between the iconographic themes used in the catacombs and the prayers in use as a part of worship in this era.[33] As Grabar says, "The paintings at Dura suggest that early Christian art was inspired by liturgy and centered on that theme."[34]

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30. du Bourguet, Early Christian Art p. 28.

31. Grabar, Beginnings. p. 26.

32. Ibid. p. 27.

33. Ibid. p. 103.

34. Andre Grabar, Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul 1969) p. 22.

Grabar's work generally disposes of the theory that early Christian art was meant to be purely decorative with no esoteric intention whatsoever.

> Of this I am, in fact, convinced: That in late antiquity there were no Christian images made for the sake of producing a pretty fresco or an appealing figurine or genre scene. Indeed we know of no such Christian figurations, where creation is a gratuitous act — art for art's sake. 35

This view is reinforced at least in part by Murry, Barnard, and others as will be shown shortly.

A facet of the "incidental" theory is that much of the inspiration for early Christian art came from pagan worship and is an indication that early Christian worship tends to imitate pagan action, especially in the use of prophalactic imagery.[36] In this sense Christian art can be said to have its origin in liturgy. It is assumed that as a part of the worship of the early Church, especially in the liturgy associated with the burial of the dead, the prayers and ritual were "illustrated" by use of the paintings on the walls and ceilings of their tombs and the carvings on the sarcophagi.

> Still all these images, Jewish and Christian, are plainly intended to comfort the beholder, and either to strengthen him in his faith, or to lead him into the Christian or Jewish religion. 37

On the other hand, the actual nature of early liturgy is largely unknown and it seems likely that the rather romantic popular notion of early Christians "stealing away"

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35. Ibid. p. xlix.

36. Ibid. p. 18.

37. Ibid. p. 27.

to worship in the catacombs is highly overstated. Therefore it is difficult to theorize with any degree of certainty how much early Christian art and liturgy were interrelated.[38]

Presumedly unanswerable, the question remains as to how much control over early art was exercised by the Church. Episcopal control, in Rome at least, is suggested by du Bourguet, noting the appointment of Callixtus archdeacon of Rome in the early third century with a specific responsibility for supervision of clergy and administration of the "cemetery".[39] This seems to suggest Church control over the catacombs and other places of worship which could imply control of the art in use as well. It is theorized by duBourguet, that early Christian art was essentially catechetical in intent and in function.[40] This would seem to imply a fairly high degree of control, not only in Rome, but generally throughout the Empire. Early converts to Christianity, both Jewish and pagan, would have been familiar with themes such as the Good Shepherd. Familiarity for the Jews with the Messianic figure, and for the pagans with the Orphic,

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38. Cf. Dix and Jungman both discuss early liturgy and, although in disagreement on some points, generally agree that the romantic "Hollywood" view of worship in the catacombs is overstated. Of course early Christian worship did include occasional attendance at ceremonies in the catacombs, perhaps in imitation of the pagan funeral feasts. Undoubtedly some of the catacomb art was related to the ceremony appropriate to these observances. See Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (London, 1946) and Joseph Jungman, The Early Liturgy (London, 1960).

39. duBourguet, Early Christian Art, p. 28.

40. Ibid. p. 58.

must have allowed for a fairly smooth transition into a Christian understanding of Jesus as the Shepherd.[41] Because the figure of the Good Shepherd was familiar to both of these two ostensibly alien cultures, it could have served as an effective means of illustrating the universality of the Christian message. The catechetical use of art seems at least feasible, if not likely, especially in the use of the Good Shepherd figure.

A recent theory proposed by Barnard is that early Christian art was used as a form of apologetic illustration. Barnard suggests that it "grew up" running parallel to the apologetic works of early Christian writers like Athenagoras.[42] Supposedly, familiar figures drawn from pagan themes were used extensively in apologetic writing and in the visual arts in a combined appeal to pagans. The similarity of the Christian Good Shepherd to the Orphic figure would make that specific image a potentially powerful focus for Christian-pagan dialog.

Murry reports that the Orpheus-Christ shepherd figure is treated in the early Fathers from the second century on, through Clement, Eusebius and Augustine.[43] Pressouryre's article on Orpheus in the Lexicon der christliche Ikonographie lists a number of references including Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem and others.[44]

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41. Ibid. p. 53.

42. Leslie W. Barnard, "Early Christian Art as Apologetic" Journal of Religious History Vol. X, 1978.

43. Sr. Charles Murry, "Art and the Early Church" Journal of Theological Studies Vol. XXVIII, 1977, p. 26.

44. L. Pressouyre, "Orpheus" Lexicon der christliche Ikonographie, Vol. III ed. Kirschbaum (Freiberg, Herder K.G. 1968) p. 356.

Thieme notes Irenaeus's indebtedness to a type of Orphic influence as interpreted through Platonist thinking. He notes that the Platonist concept of the Good affects the thinking of such Christian writers as Augustine and Dionysious Areopagite.

> So then one sees how Irenaeus is indebted, through Plato, to the ancient (Orphic) teachings. ὁ θεὸς ἀρχήν τε καὶ τέλεν τήν καὶ μέσα τῶν ὄντων ἁπάντων ἔχων. ...Here were developed the neo-Platonist ideas of the Good and of Being which are found in Augustine and Dionysious Areopagite. 45

Another example can be seen in Clement of Alexandria who had been a student of pagan religion and philosophy before his conversion to Christianity. He saw in the pagan poets a prefiguring of Christian themes. In his view "Pindar, too, had recognized in God a Savior, and so anticipated the Christian theme". He occasionally made use of Orphic poetry which taught "the unity of the Divine Nature and even anticipated the doctrine of the Word".[46]

The figure of the Good Shepherd can be found in Patristic exegesis of the two Gospel references most often associated with Christ in the role as Shepherd of the Church. An example of this is Origen's exegesis of John 10:1-21:

> But be kind to men and welcome at any time the inclination to better things of the soul of those who do not strive eagerly for reason, but like a sheep have gentleness and meekness not deliberate but unreasoning. He becomes a Shepherd; for the Lord saves men and beasts. 47

Origen exhorts his readers to a humble and moral life, call-

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45. Thieme, "Gut das Hochste" p. 258.

46. R. B. Tollington, Clement of Alexandria Vol. I (London, Williams & Northgate 1914) p. 172.

47. Origen, Commentary on John 1:27, quoted in Harold Smith, Ante-Nicene Exegesis of the Gospels, Vol. IV, (London, SPCK, 1928) p. 12.

ing them to be as sheep, following the lead of the Shepherd. The statement "for the Lord saves men and beasts" calls to mind Orphic imagery, for Orpheus is usually portrayed in the role of one who tames wild beasts with divine music. In this passage Origen seems to be saying that rather than pursuing "reason" one should accept the Gospel message aspiring to a high moral life, to "be kind to men and welcome at any time the inclination to better things of the soul..." This is precisely the type of thinking that both repelled and attracted the pagan philosophers — repelled them because they could not accept faith which did not aspire to reason as the ultimate source of truth, and attracted them because the appeal to a moral life bore astounding fruit in the lives of the common people.

An example of exegesis of the second Gospel passage utilizing the figure of the Good Shepherd is Irenaeus on Luke 15:1-7:

> The Lord descended into the lower parts of the earth, seeking the sheep which had been lost, presenting and commanding to His Father the man he had found. 48

Again in this passage the figure of the Good Shepherd would have had great meaning for pagans because of the similarities to Orphic belief and the image of one who literally will go to the depths of Hades in order to save the lost sheep. The use of the Good Shepherd as a literary figure in Patristic writing will be discussed more fully at a later point in this paper. Let it suffice to say that there is ample use of this figure in the writing of the early

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48. Irenaeus on Luke XV: 1-32, in Smith, Ante-Nicene Exegesis p. 125.

Fathers.[49]

The emphasis in much early Christian writing is not on adapting Christianity to paganism but rather the reverse, on adapting paganism to Christianity.

References drawing on pagan imagery are intended to draw pagans, through familiar themes, into the Christian "flock". Barnard in his book on Athenagoras puts the matter succinctly:

> The Apologists did not scruple to use technical philosophic terms which were the current stock-in-trade of educated pagans. It is however an error to believe that in doing this they so hellenized Christianity as to dilute its central doctrines. They were first and foremost Churchmen and their object was to christianize hellenism, not to hellenize Christianity. So their first aim was the same as that of the present day missionary, viz. to defend and establish monotheism as the foundation of the Gospel. 50

In the formative years the Church developed a number of metaphors which illustrated her view of the life and ministry of Jesus. The Shepherd and sheep, one of these metaphors, had great value in providing a view of the role of Jesus in relation to the Church. A shepherd without sheep or sheep without a leader was an impossible image, therefore Jesus and the Church were inextricably linked together. Yerkes says that the Church and Christ are linked together in their essential being.[51] Linking or Unifying is one of the themes associated with the Shepherd. In this sense the

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49. Volumes I and II of the Biblia Patristica cites a total of 158 references to John 10:1-21 and a total of 104 references to Luke 15:1-32.

50. Leslie W. Barnard, Athenagoras: A Study in Second Century Christian Apologetic (Paris, Beauchesne, 1972) p. 11.

51. Yerkes, Sacrifice. p. 208.

Good Shepherd can be seen as a unifying theme which draws together the divergent groups of pagans and Jews into a single body. This body is infused with a dynamic role, to continue the mission of Christ, and to become his body, working for the eventual salvation of all the world. Gradually the role of the Shepherd shifts from being a figure of Christ to being a figure of the leaders of the Church, the Bishops.

Several theories about the use of early Christian art have been examined and it is likely that there is some truth in most of them. As is true of the art of any age, early Christian artists were individuals who were probably motivated by any number of various impulses, yet there is a degree of uniformity in much of their work that indicates a certain unity of thought and purpose.

It is possible that where this unity of thought and purpose occurs it is motivated by a specific interest in the catechetical and apologetical use of art by the early Church. The degree of control exercised by early Church authorities is impossible to ascertain. Probably it varied from time to time and from place to place. Nevertheless, if there truly is a unity in both visual and literary themes, it would give credence to du Bourguet and Barnard, and to the idea that Christian art had catechetical and apologetical use. It will be the purpose of the next chapters of this study to examine more fully the use of the figure of the Good Shepherd as a visual image, and as a literary device, comparing usages to see what sort of relationship exists between these two forms of imagery.

III

THE GOOD SHEPHERD IN THE VISUAL ARTS

Τίς ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ὑμῶν ἔχων ἑκατὸν πρόβατα καὶ ἀπολέσας ἐξ αὐτῶν ἓν οὐ καταλείπει τὰ ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ καὶ πορεύεται ἐπὶ τὸ ἀπολωλὸς ἕως εὕρῃ αὐτό; καὶ εὑρὼν ἐπιτίθησιν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὤμους αὐτοῦ χαίρων,
Luke 15:4-5

It has been shown that at the beginning of the Christian era the figure of the Good Shepherd was an image familiar to the Mediterranean world. One of the more interesting if not more puzzling questions is the origin of the form this figure took in early Christian art. As Christianity began as a Jewish sect, the force of Old Testament tradition was a significant factor in its make up. Although the Jews had a strong Good Shepherd literary tradition, as was previously pointed out, there was no strong visual arts tradition for a figure of the Good Shepherd. Even so, a cursory glance at any standard text on early Christian art will show that the Good Shepherd is one of the most popular figures in use. Furthermore, it is clear that the Christian imagery used draws heavily on pagan imagery. In an attempt to explore this phenomenon, the reader's attention is now drawn to the specifics of Good Shepherd iconography.

The Figure of the Good Shepherd in Pagan Visual Arts

Gardner, in his classic description of Greek art, points out that there was a significant difference between the mystic religions connected with the worship at Eleusis and the ordinary cultus of the gods of the Olympic circle, or the cultus of the Heroes.[1] In the Graeco-Roman Empire of the

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1. Percy Gardner, The Principles of Greek Art (New York, Macmillian 1914) p. 86.

first century, there was a continuing contrast between these two tendencies which was manifest in the various works of art.

Among the monuments of the first four centuries, the sarcophagi of Rome provide some of the most interesting examples of pagan art in general, and of Good Shepherd figures in particular.[2] In order to understand the significance of Good Shepherd figures in Roman funerary art it is necessary to examine briefly the phenomenon of sarcophagus art itself. In the period of time from the beginning of the Christian era to the start of the fifth century, Roman sculpture is primarily represented by an enormous number of marble sarcophagi. These sarcophagi were turned out by various workshops that produced commercial work of diverse quality, based on a more or less standard set of themes from which the customer could choose, much as one orders things from a mail order catalogue today.

> In other words, a sarcophagus was seldom executed to order, with the sculptured reliefs being specially created to suit the personal circumstances of the deceased. More often it is mass-produced work, with the heads of the leading figures left blank, so that the features of any client could be inserted at need. Very often this last stage has not been carried out, and when the portrait is there, it tends to contrast sharply with the rest of the work. 3

The Roman workshops continued to turn out these "formula"

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2. There are a number of examples of pre-Christian Good Shepherd themes in pagan art which, in one form or another, include the figure of the criophore. Leclercq details an extensive number of examples including the Hermes-criophore and Orpheus-criophore. Many of these examples include boy shepherds. See "Pasteur Bon" in Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne, Vol. 13 prt. 2, 1938.

3. R. G. Bandinelli, Rome the Late Empire (London, Thames & Hudson, 1971) p. 56.

sarcophagi for the first four centuries with very little change or fresh input. "The work was thus a mere exercise in style, and those who executed it ended up as its prisoners."[4] In many instances sarcophagi were imported from other regions and done in varying styles. Apparently they were sometimes shipped to Rome with the details left undone, presumably to be finished by local Roman artisans adept at working in these "regional styles".[5]

There was evidently a wide range of stock styles available so that people with a wide variety of interests could find something to their liking. For example the sarcophagi of followers of the mystery cults were often decorated with themes appropriate to their beliefs, such as the theme of life after death.[6] In fact, in the third century "eschatological" themes seem to predominate on Roman sarcophagi. At the center of this symbolism one finds the idea that the essence of humanity is immortal. At death this essence leaves the body, passing into a world beyond the grave.[7] Theatre motifs indicate the idea that one must go through life playing the role directed by fate. Motifs of Heroes such as Hercules indicate that one must shoulder trials and face fate heroically; sacrifice motifs indicate the importance of respect for the gods; and the Shepherd is indicative of the need for conducting oneself with patience and humanity: Tritons, nereids and eagles accompany the de-

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4. Ibid. p. 42.

5. Ibid. p. 45.

6. R. G. Bandinelli, Rome the Centre of Power (London, Thames & Hudson, 1970) p. 305.

7. Bandinelli, Rome the Late Empire, p. 46.

ceased to the Island of the Blest. Bandinelli states that in the third century there seems to be a definite preference for Dionysiac sarcophagi, over the sarcophagi decorated with epic or classical mythological themes, "which had been the rage for 100 years before".[8] Some of these sarcophagi have a vat-like shell, decorated with a row of parallel "s" shaped flutings known as strigils, and with lion's heads in front. This imagery is derived from the vat in which grapes were mashed and fermented. The wine produced was made to pour through the mouths of the decorative lions — symbolic of purification. The sarcophagus thus decorated was an allusion to the prospect of a new and better life, purified after death.[9]

Of course not all third century sarcophagi are only concerned with life after death. Themes such as Prometheus are examples of an emphasis not only on astral immortality, but on "the positive content of a well led life here on earth, in a world which reveals its own special bounteousness..."[10]

One of the best examples of pagan funerary themes is the Velletri Sarcophagus, Velletri Museo Civico, which is essentially a composite of these major themes, expressed by symbols and allegories.[11] Perhaps more representative of the norm in the early Christian era, the second century sarcophagus of the Myth of Orestes, Rome, is according to

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8. Ibid. p. 50.

9. Ibid. p. 49.

10. Ibid. p. 48.

11. Bandinelli. Late Empire, plate 41, page 46.

Bandinelli, a typical workshop product.

> This was mass production, of high quality admittedly, but invariably standardized. The prospective purchaser would choose, from among a number of set themes, that which best suited both the occasion and his pocket. 12

It appears that the Roman upper classes aspired to a higher level of thought, and among their choices an often used theme was that of the philosopher. The Sarcophagus of Publius Peregrinus in the Museo Torlonia, Rome, is a good example of this.[13] Although not a philosopher in life, the theme of the noble philosopher has been chosen, and Peregrinus' portrait is shown seated as a philosopher in the company of other such "learned" men. The Roman workshops were evidently capable of catering to a certain amount of variety in taste and means, within their stock repertoire. For those with less lofty ideals the Dionysian or Bacchic rites held much interest. For example the sarcophagus built into the wall of the facade of the Villa Medici in Rome, contains a scene of initiation, including a satyr and a variety of Bacchic symbols, such as the grape and vine motif.[14]

One must bear in mind the situation in Rome in the early Christian era, the fact that there was a wide variety of personal latitude in belief and custom, and that many highly divergent and at times syncretistic religions competed for public acceptance. In that context we shall now turn to the specific figure of the Good Shepherd and its place in this lebensanschauung.

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12. Bandinelli, Center of Power, plate 315, p. 279.
13. Bandinelli, Late Empire, plate 51, p. 57.
14. Bandinelli, Late Empire, plate 44, p. 51.

As has been discussed, the Orphic figure of the Good Shepherd is probably the most common pagan expression of this image, although by no means the exclusive one.[15] Orphic teaching first made its appearance in Greece during the sixth century B.C. It was a religious awakening or revival with teachings about the nature of the soul which were assimilated, at least to some extent, by various important characters such as Pindar, Pythagoras, and Plato.[16]

In Eisler's view, Orphic thought held a significant place in early Mediterranean culture, as evidenced by his mythological connections with the origins of much of the basic elements in life.

> In addition to this fundamental importance of Orpheus for the history of ancient cults, his name is traditionally connected not only with the origins of Greek music, poetry, writing, and even agriculture, but also with the dawn of ancient philosophy. 17

Harrison's extensive study of Orphism offers the opinion that Orphic thought is a culmination of ancient Greek religion.[18] In its earliest form, Harrison feels that it reached for a high level of purity, and was an attempt to recapture a pre-blood sacrifice form of religion not con-

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15. Orpheus appears with lyre, Phrygian cap, cloak or mantle, and long tunic, in several early catacomb paintings including: cemetary of Callisto (220), catacomb of Saints Pierre and Marcell (late 3rd century), Meme cemetery (late 4th century). Cf. H. Stern, "Orphée dans l' Art paléochrétien" Cahiers Archéologiques, XXIII 1974. See also Leclercq, "Orphée" in Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie.

16. James Adam, The Religious Teachers of Greece (Aberdeen, Univ. Press, 1908) p. 92.

17. Robert Eisler, Orpheus the Fisher (London, J.M. Watkins, 1921) p. 4.

18. Jane E. Harrison, Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion (Cambridge, Univ. Press, 1903) p. 659.

taminated with the excesses of Dionysian rites.[19] By the early Christian era it had become interwoven with Dionysian worship and also associated to some extent with the cult of Apollo.

The popular expression of Orphic worship, by Plato's time, had become so contaminated with syncretic, superstitious belief that it was the disdain of high minded philosophers. The basic Orphic teaching on the soul, however, had an influence on Plato and others, as was mentioned earlier.[20] In Orphic belief it was held that the soul was incarcerated in the body because of sin. It was said that the "body was a tomb".[21]

Orphism was a religion of deliverance (λύσις) a religion which preached salvation. In this respect its basic promise was very similar to that which would later be offered by Christianity.[22] As Adams points out, the theogonic poems of Orphic tradition give a picture of their theology. For example he quotes:

> Zeus, the first created
> Zeus, beginning and ending
> Zeus, head and middle
> Out of whom all things are created.

It is interesting to note the use of "Zeus, out of whom

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19. Ibid. p. 509.

20. There is a tradition that Pythagoras of Samos was initiated into the Leibethrian Orpheus-mysteries by Aglaophamus. The testimony of Herodotus and others confirms the notion that there was a tie between the so-called Orphic or Dionysiac and the so-called Pythagorean community. Cf. Eisler, Orpheus the Fisher, p. 11.

21. Adams, Religious Teachers p. 97.

22. Note Paul: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Rom 7:24.

all things are created."[23] There is an obvious similarity to New Testament references to Jesus as the Alpha and Omega.[24]

A major concern for the Orphic believer was the attainment of divine life. It was believed that man should aspire to divine life through purity in the present life. To quote Harrison, "Consecration (ὁσιότης) perfect purity issuing in divinity, is, it will be seen, the keynote of Orphic faith, the goal of Orphic ritual."[25]

Although there is no concrete evidence as to just how Orphic communities were originally formed, by Plato's time Orphic votaries were called saints (ὅσιοι) or holy ones.[26] The concept of purity as an ideal was still an important element, even if it had degenerated by this time in actual practice. Thus the pagan image of Orpheus in the figure of the Good Shepherd would still carry the association of holiness and purity of life, even into the Christian era and even in spite of the vagaries of first century paganism.

Early images of Orpheus figure him as either a shepherd or as a tamer of wild beasts. The usual iconography includes either a seated or a standing figure, most often playing a lyre, but sometimes playing a flute or syrinx. He usually, but not always, is shown in a loose (phrygian) cap and a long garment, sometimes in a sort of trousers (illustration I). As the tamer of wild beasts he is traditionally surrounded by a variety of beasts; as shepherd he is surrounded by sheep and often carries a sheep as in the early ram or calf-

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23. Adam, Rel. Teachers, p. 95.

24. Cf. Revelation 1:8, 21:6 and 22:13.

25. Harrison, Prolegomena, p. 478.

26. Adam, Rel. Teachers, p. 93.

bearer images of the Acropolis and the Heraklion museum of Crete.[27]

Pressouyre's article on Orpheus points out the fact that Orphic imagery was not only associated with Christianity, but also with Mithraism.[28] The Orphic Cult-Image Representing the Birth of the God Phanes-Dionysos, From the World Egg, in the Royal Museum of Modena is an example of such a figure.[29]

An excellent example of pagan Orphic iconography is the mosaic in the Tripoli Museum, taken from the House of Orpheus in Leptis Magna, and dating from the third century.[30] At the top of the mosaic is a panel with the seated figure of Orpheus, unbearded with long hair. He wears the typical phrygian cap, and appears to have on a long tunic and trousers of some sort, or leggins. He is playing a lyre and is surrounded by a wide variety of wild animals and birds, who appear to be listening to him. Another good example of Orphic imagery is the Bobbio pyxis of the fourth century.[31] Again he is dressed in phrygian cap, with lyre, and is surrounded by beasts, this time both real and mythical.

An interesting theory related to the iconography of Orphism is that suggested by Eisler. He points out that the origin of the name Orpheus has been widely disputed and

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27. See the discussion of early Shepherd figures in Chapter I of this study.

28. L. Pressouyre, "Orpheus", Lexicon der christliche Ikonographie Vol. III (Freiberg, Herden K.G., 1968) p. 357.

29. Cf. "Notice sur deux Bas-reliefs Mithriaques" Revue Archéologique, No. XL 1902, pp. 1-13 & plate 1.

30. Bandinelli, Late Empire. plate 239, p. 260.

31. Bobbio Museum, Abbey of St. Columban (Gough, Origins. p. 124.)

suggests that the name has roots in a word meaning "fish".[32]

Eisler suggests that to the normal attributes of Orpheus, we should add the figure of mystic Fisher. He believes that the origins of Orpheus include an amalgamation of early forms of a "fish-god".[33] The assumption is that from his primitive form as both a hunter and a fisher (both coming from the same root word according to Eisler) Orpheus was gradually transformed into the more civilized herdsman, and finally into the figure of the Good Shepherd.[34] A "Fisher" connection in Orphic imagery has significance for Christian iconography in relation to the well known theme "Fisher of Men".

It is difficult to go beyond the speculative stage in dealing with the earliest Orphic imagery, but there can be no question that by the first century of the Christian era, Orpheus has been identified with both Dionysos and Apollo.[35] The attributes of Apollo are similar to those of Orpheus which makes the connection a likely one from the standpoint of traditional iconography. Beside being shown as a musician-god with song and lyre, Apollo is sometimes portrayed as a shepherd, as in Apollo-Carneios.[36] Murry notes

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32. Eisler, Orpheus the Fisher, p. 14.

33. Eisler believes that there is evidence that the fish-god was combined with a writer-god and that both these forms appear in Orpheus. "The old Semitic myth of the fish-shaped and fish eating writer-god migrated on the one hand to the fisher-revering Indian Vishnu worshippers, and on the other to the Greek priests and adorers of the Lycian fisher-god Orpheus, and even—through the old Phoenician colonies on the British coasts—to the Gaelic salmon fishers of Erin who invoked the old Celtic fisher-god Nodon." (p. 50).

34. Ibid. p. 18.

35. Harrison, Prolegomena, p. 460.

36. Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology p. 121.

a link between Orpheus and Apollo in the sarcophagus of Porto Torres, Sardinia, which portrays a "Christian" Orpheus with a griffin, which is also an attribute of Apollo.[37]

Orphic Imagery is often combined with a Dionysian eschatological element. A part of the purification rite in Orphic ritual evidently involved the use of milk. According to Eisler, the South Italian gold labels include the phrase "as a kid have I encountered the milk".[38] In this imagery the initiate "sinks into the womb of the lady, the Queen of the Underworld" to be reborn into new life. New initiates into the Dionysian rites were fed milk and honey[39] a food symbolic of their "newly born" status.[40] The significance of milk also will figure in the next chapter as a literary image in Patristic writing.

The Figure of the Good Shepherd in Jewish Visual Arts

Before moving to a discussion of Christian imagery it is necessary to briefly discuss visual representation of

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37. Murry, "Christian Orpheus" p. 27.

38. Eisler, Orpheus Fisher, p. 69.

39. Ibid.

40. Cf. The story of Christ and Nicodemus: "Jesus answered and said unto him, verily verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." John 3:1-13. It is also interesting to note the early Christian practice of feeding new baptized Christians with milk and honey immediately after their baptism. Eisler suggests that this practice comes from pagan usage, and not from the scant references to "the Land of Milk and Honey" in the Old Testament, as some authorities have claimed. It is difficult to find direct evidence of pagan liturgical parallels to Christian liturgy but this may in fact be one. Note Paul: "I have fed you with milk and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it." I Cor. 3:2. See also Heb. 5:12 & 13, and I Peter 2:2, for similar references to milk, symbolic of spiritual feeding for new Christians.

the Good Shepherd in Jewish tradition. It is now known that the Jews, prior to and at the beginning of the Christian era, did decorate their synagogues with paintings, mosaics and the like. However, there is virtually no evidence of a visual figure of the Good Shepherd in Jewish art of this era. It should be noted that there have been some attempts to demonstrate the existence of such a figure — a so-called "Jewish Orpheus" which would serve as the source for the Christian figure which is to become so prominent. The existence of such a figure is highly questionable however. Murry states unequivocally that such a figure did not exist.

> It is clear, on present evidence, that a real Orpheus figure never existed either in Jewish literature or Jewish art, and so could not have been the source of the Christian figure of the catacombs. 41

Goodenough, and later Stern, attempted to show that Christian/Orpheus Shepherd figures came from a Jewish tradition of Davidic/Orpheus figures. Murry, however, in reviewing their work points out possibly fallacies in their arguments. All things considered, a Jewish visual arts origin for the Christian figure is highly unlikely.[42] It seems fairly certain

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41. Murry, Christian Orpheus, p. 26.

42. For the arguments in favor of a Jewish Orpheus see H. Stern, "Orphée dans l'Art Paleochrétien" Cahiers Archéologiques, XXIII, 1974, pp. 1-16. Note that Stern's argument, largely drawn from E. R. Goodenough, rests for the most part on the evidence of a painting in the Synagogue of Dura Europos, and on a 6th century mosaic in the Gaza Synagogue. Murry raises serious questions about the interpretation of the Dura Europos painting which cannot be ignored. The 6th century mosaic is too late in date to have been of any influence on early Christian art. Stern also cites, as evidence of Orphic literary tradition, an apocryphal psalm (Qumran, Hebrew Psalm CLI) which again is questionable. As Murry points out, representations of musicians, seated and standing, male and female, playing stringed instruments are common in the East in this era. They are not necessarily

that Christian Good Shepherd figures trace their visual tradition from pagan images.

The Figure of The Good Shepherd in Christian Visual Arts As Seen on Sarcophagi

Having indicated the pagan origins of Good Shepherd iconography, attention is now directed to the Christian version of that figure. However it must be noted, as Deichmann has pointed out, that the line between pagan and Christian art is not clear cut, and that in some cases determination of what is specifically Christian is at best difficult.[43] As Eisler has shown there is evidence of Orphic imagery throughout the Roman Empire on Imperial coins, in Mosaics and sculpture, "scattered all over the empire from Palestine and Africa to Great Britain".[44] In viewing early Christian figures of the Good Shepherd, then, it is important to bear in mind that Orphic imagery plays an es-

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all Orphic images (Murry, "Christian Orpheus" p.20-26. Also see Stern's reply in the same issue of Cahiers — 'De l'Orphée juif et chrétien" p. 28).

It is interesting to note that although the phrygian cap is often cited as evidence that a particular figure is Orphic in imagery, in fact the phrygian cap appears often in pagan and Christian art of the first five centuries and may merely be symbolic of oriental dress with no other particular significance. For example, a middle second century wall painting of Mithras the Bull-Killer shows Mithras dressed in Oriental garb and wearing a phrygian cap. He is flanked by two other figures similarly dressed. The figure is very similar in dress to the already mentioned mosaic of Orpheus in the Tripoli Musuem. See Plate IX in Das Römischte Weltreich. The same volume, plate 237, shows a Roman sarcophagus with a scene in which a Roman soldier leads away a bound oriental prisoner wearing a similar phrygian cap. See Theodor Krans, Das Römischte Weltreich (Berlin, Propyläen Verlag, 1967).

43. F. W. Deichmann, Repertorium der Christlich-Antiken Sarkophage (Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag. GMBH, 1967). p. 1.

44. Eisler, Orpheus Fisher, p. 2.

pecially strong role in the formation of the Christian figure. As Harrison has said:

> In Pompeian wall-paintings and Graeco-Roman sarcophagi it is as a magical musician with power over all the wild untamed things in nature that Orpheus appears. The conception naturally passed into Christian art and it is interesting to watch the magical musician transformed gradually into the Good Shepherd. The bad wild beasts, the lions and lynxes, are weeded out one by one and we are left, as in the wonderful Ravenna mosaic, with only a congregation of mild patient sheep. 45

Although one can go into great detail classifying the various types of Good Shepherd figures found in early Christian art, general descriptions will suffice for the purposes of this paper.[46] Some of the earliest references to the Good Shepherd are found in tomb inscriptions. For example the epitaph on the second century tomb of Abercius which reads:

ὢν ὁ ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΜΕΝΟΣ ΑΓΝΟΥ
ὃς βόσκει προβάτων ἀγέλας ὄρεσιν πεδίοις [47]

Another example is in the catacomb of Domitilla where an incised line image of a seated shepherd with crosier, and a reclining sheep can be found. The shepherd is unbearded and has short hair and a short tunic, and holds what looks like

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45. Harrison, Prolegomena. p. 458. Note Eisler as well: "Finally, we cannot doubt that Christian faith took tentative steps into the reluctant world of Graeco-Roman paganism under the benevolent patronage of Orpheus, the fact is attested to not only by numerous Christian interpolations in the heiratic texts of Orphism, but also by several well-known representations of Orpheus among his beasts in early Christian cemeterial paintings and sculptured sarcophagi." (Orpheus Fisher p.4)

46. Leclerq lists ten types of Good Shepherd figures based on distinctions of dress, hair length, beard, and accountrements. (Dictionnaire d'Archéologie, Col. 2301-2304). One can also distinguish among the different postures, and settings of the shepherd, etc.

47. Ibid.

a syrinx. An inscription next to the figure states "Geronti Vibas in Deo" (illustration II).[48]

A typical example of early Christian use of the Good Shepherd figure is found in the 3rd century Vatican sarcophagus of the Bearded Shepherd.[49] The Shepherd is dressed in a short tunic, with knee length boots or leggins, and has short hair and a short beard. He holds a ram on his shoulders and there are trees on either side of him. Rams standing at both the left and right of him appear, either to be gazing at him or to be grazing peacefully (illustration III). A late third century sarcophagus from Ostia portrays a Good Shepherd with very clear Orphic imagery.[50] In this portrayal the Shepherd plays a lyre while seated or crouched in a stylized position, his right foot raised, his left stretched out behind him. He has long flowing hair, but the traditional phrygian cap is absent. A single sheep reposes between his feet. A single tree is glimpsed behind him. The sarcophagus is decorated with the strigil motif, and at each end of the sarcophagus there are figures of the Philosopher.

Another example of the Christian Orpheus figure, found in the Vatican, shows the Shepherd in almost exactly the same pose with lyre, long tunic, and including the phrygian cap. His head is turned hard to his right shoulder in an almost grotesque position, to obtain a profile view. Again

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48. Ibid.

49. Museo Pio Christiano, Vatican, (Deichmann plate 1).

50. Osia, Antica Museo, late 3rd century (Deichmann pl. 1022).

a single sheep is at his feet, a tree behind him.[51] Eisler notes that a Fisher figure is also found on this sarcophagus, which he feels tends to corroborate his thesis that the image of an early pagan fisher-god has been incorporated into Orphic imagery.

One style of sarcophagus that is quite common uses the convention of a portrait roundel featuring the deceased, usually man and wife, between strigils, with a small representation of the Good Shepherd directly below the roundel. For example, Deichmann plate 778, shows such an arrangement, in which the shepherd is seated, feeding a dog while a single sheep grazes behind them. There are trees on either side of the shepherd, who is bearded, wears a short tunic, and holds a crosier in one hand. The composition is very cramped due to the small amount of space. In a band running across the top of the sarcophagus, above the roundel are two panels, one portraying the last supper, the other portraying Jonah and the Whale.[52]

A "musing" Shepherd can be found in some instances, as in the Piazza Farnese sarcophagus, featuring an Orant as the central figure, and with Good Shepherds at either end. These Shepherd figures each lean on their crosiers, seeming to gaze at the Orant. Between the figures are pastoral and farming scenes in a rather crowded composition.[53]

On a sarcophagus of Isola Sacra several Shepherds appear,

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51. Vatican, Museo Pio Christiano, end of 3rd—early 4th century (Deichmann plate 70; Eisler plate 34).

52. Museo Nationale, Rome, last third of third century (Deichmann plate 778).

53. Piazza Farnese, last quarter of third century (Deichmann plate 961).

either standing or sitting in various poses. Rams and sheep appear between the figures, and trees are in the background.[54] What makes this composition quite interesting is that although the central figure is clearly an image of the Good Shepherd, the other Shepherd figures (perhaps apostles?) are given virtually equal status — that is they are shown just as large and in as much detail as the Good Shepherd. The only iconographical mark of "status" for the Good Shepherd is his central position. All of the figures have short hair, and short tunics; some have beards. The Good Shepherd has a lamb on his shoulders and he alone holds a crosier.[55]

A bearded Shepherd plays a prominent role in another Vatican sarcophagus.[56] On the far left are several small Shepherds (which could be taken variously as children, cherubs or pagan cupids) dressed as is the main figure in short tunics, boots and with short hair. They are engaged in pastoral activities including milking sheep. A similar bearded Shepherd appears on another Vatican sarcophagus holding a ram on his shoulders, with a straight staff in his right hand, and with a dog behind him. He is flanked on either side by images of the four seasons.[57] These personifications

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54. Isoal Sacra, end of third—start of fourth century (Deichmann plate 1038).

55. It should be noted that generally speaking it does not seem feasible to distinguish between a Good Shepherd figure and a figure of a Shepherd that is not a Good Shepherd. The distinction made in describing this particular sarcophagus is arbitrary, and solely for the purpose of illustrating the nature of this rather unusual sarcophagus. Extrapolation beyond this point is of questionable validity.

56. Vatican, Museo Pio Christiano, end of 3rd—start of 4th century (Deichmann plate 2).

57. Vatican, Museo Pio Christiano, first quarter of 4th century (Deichmann plate 148).

are of equal height with the Good Shepherd and are dressed similarly. The four season iconography is taken directly from pagan imagery including horns of fruit and other such images.

According to Bandinelli, the mid fourth century in Rome marks the beginning of a new type of classicism, perhaps influenced by the Imperial Court. As an example he cites the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, Perfect of Rome. This is an example of "a correct and polished style in which the suffering of the third century is transformed into an appearance of serenity (a new kind of official conformism).[58]

In Deichmann's plate 87, in a small relief under a portrait roundel, two Shepherds are shown, one milking a sheep while the other holds the ewe's head.[59] Both are dressed in short tunics; the one holding the ewe's head has a shepherd's bag.

A central portrait roundel in the outline of a scallop shell is found on a sarcophagus in the cemetery of S. Sebastiano which includes something of a conglomeration of images.[60] Below the portrait roundel a small Shepherd is milking a sheep while another Shepherd stands, leaning on his crosier, a dog at his feet. Panels of strigils flank this center section, while at each end Shepherd figures with syrinxes in hand, reminiscent of Orphic imagery, can be seen.

In place of or in addition to the central roundel and

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58. Bandinelli, Rome Late Empire. p. 81.

59. Vatican, Museo Pio Christiano, 353 (by inscription), (Deichmann plate 87).

60. Coemeterian, Cimitere di S. Sebastiano, second quarter of fourth century, (Deichmann plate 239).

portraits, a square or rectangular inscription panel is sometimes found. In one instance this panel is flanked by young men in long mantles facing away from the panel toward sheep coming in single file toward the center.[61] Each sheep holds in his mouth a circle or crown, perhaps symbolic of the crown of the martyrs. Palm trees are seen between each sheep.

Jesus as a young Shepherd is a central figure in one of the later Vatican sarcophagi.[62] In this example he holds a crosier, has rather long hair and no beard. On either side of him can be seen images, probably representative of the twelve apostles. At each of the far ends is a figure of a somewhat older looking Shepherd. A sheep is walking at the feet of each apostle, and trees and more sheep are found at the ends next to the "older" Shepherds.

To bring this brief survey of Good Shepherd figures on Christian sarcophagi to a close, perhaps one of the most sophisticated examples is an engraving showing a theorized reconstruction of a late fourth century work.[63] In this example Jesus in tunic and pallium, holding a scroll representative of the Law, stands on a mound. On his right one sees a small image of the Agnus Dei (indicated by a frontal view of a sheep with a cross above his head). Four rivers, symbolic of Paradise, flow from the mound, and there are sheep on each side of the mound. Jesus stands between images of Peter and Paul. The composition is completed by narrative

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61. Vatican, Museo Pio Christiano, last quarter fourth century, (Deichmann plate 138).

62. Vatican, Museo Pio Christiano, last quarter fourth century, (Deichmann plate 130).

63. A theoretical reconstruction based on fragments of a late fourth century work (Deichmann plate 28).

scenes: on the right is Jesus as a young man in the Temple, and on the left is Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a donkey (illustration IV).

In summarizing the iconographical features of the Good Shepherd as they appear on early Christian sarcophagi, one must bear in mind the commercial nature of sarcophagi construction. Except in rare cases, one did not have a sarcophagus made to order, but rather chose from among available themes. Christians, if they wished to use a sarcophagus, had to choose from what was available, hence a certain amount of pagan imagery might occur on the sarcophagus of even a devoted, anti-pagan Christian. This historical fact makes speculation about the nature of early Christianity based on sarcophagus decoration somewhat chancy. The Good Shepherd, obviously a commonly chosen theme, would have had special meaning to Christians quite apart from the intent of the artisian directly responsible for the work's completion.

This is in no way to denigrate the significance such a figure might have had for individuals who viewed it. The relationship and experience of meaning in the artist-work-viewer interchange remains a complicated and little understood phenomenon even today. In all likelihood some people chose to have a Good Shepherd sarcophagus for religious reasons, and some chose that same theme for purely esthetic reasons. Thus it is impossible to really know how much of the symbolism of early sarcophagi was taken seriously by most people, and how much was taken only as decoration. Nock points out:

> So in verse epitaphs, Greek and Latin alike
> but especially Latin, we see a mechanical use

> of flosculi from classical poets and an extraordinary lack of logical sequence. The writers put down anything that might sound and look impressive. 64

The commerical exigencies of sarcophagus production had a direct effect on the monuments extant. The degree to which this effect altered or modified early Christian art is very difficult to say, likewise the effect of commercial demand for specific themes is also difficult to assess.

Good Shepherd figures generally are more simply portrayed on the earlier sarcophagi than they are on the later sarcophagi. Also the use of imagery on the earlier sarcophagi is less specifically Christian. Early images of the Good Shepherd are often clean shaven or with short beards, usually with short hair, often wearing short tunics and knee high boots or leggins. The sheep are usually carried on the Shepherd's shoulders and usually there are sheep on either side of the figures. The Shepherds may have staffs or crosiers, but crosiers seem to become more common later. Late figures are more apt to have longer hair and longer tunics. The early Shepherds are more often shown standing in a rather classic pose, the later figures sit, bend, converse, milk ewes, or lean on their staffs as if in thought. There are usually trees present and often the Shepherds have bags or wallets. In some instances, as for example Deichmann's plates 130 and 239, several shepherds appear on the same sarcophagus, each with different iconographical features. In individual cases one might legitimately distinguish between "Good Shepherd" and "ordinary shepherd"

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64. Arthur D. Nock, "Sarcophagi and Symbolism" printed in Arthur Darby Nock: Essays on Religion and the Ancient World ed. Stewart (Oxford, Claredon Press, 1972) p. 618.

figures. To push this distinction too far however, would be of questionable validity.

One can safely say that Good Shepherd figures were evidently quite popular among early Christians and that their iconographic features were highly influenced by pagan, especially Orphic imagery. One also can say that over a period of several generations there is a slow and conservative trend to become more specifically Christian in nature.

The Figure of the Good Shepherd in Christian Arts as Seen in Paintings

Shifting from sarcophagi, we shall now concern ourselves with paintings of the Good Shepherd. The vast bulk of early Good Shepherd paintings are found in the catacombs of Rome, however, one exceptional work outside of the catacombs must be noted. Dating from slightly before the mid-third century the Christian Church-house baptistry in Dura-Europos, Syria, is of great significance, in view of the sparsity of examples of its like.

The figure of the Good Shepherd occupies a place of major importance in the baptistry, as Perkins has noted:

> The arched wall behind the basin bore the major cult painting, the Good Shepherd, just as the pagan temples placed in a comparable position the image of the god. 65

The Shepherd is beardless, has short hair, and a short loose tunic. His weight is on his left leg and he leans slightly to the right. He carries a ponderous sheep on his shoulders, and a large flock is seen moving in front of him. There is no ground line and the composition is unfocused and ill de-

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65. Ann Perkins, The Art of Duros-Europos (London, Oxford Press, 1973) p. 53.

fined. Perkins notes that the subjects in Dura have much in common with those in Rome, suggesting a certain uniformity in imagery.[66]

Shifting from Syria to Rome one finds some of the earliest paintings of the Good Shepherd in existence today. Among these is an example found in the Catacomb of Domitilla.[67] This painting is in the center of a ceiling section, in an area sectioned off by heavy dark lines and divided into geometric shapes. The Shepherd holds the sheep on his shoulders with both hands, the right hand holding the front feet and the left holding the back feet. The circle in which the Shepherd is painted is bounded by areas decorated with birds, flowers, and floral motifs.[68] This painting, along with others from the same era, is done in a rough stylized expressionist manner. In another example taken from the Catacomb of Domitilla, the Shepherd holds the sheep on his shoulders with his left hand, while he holds a syrinx in his right hand. Other sheep and trees are seen on either side of him.[69] This Good Shepherd is shown as the central figure in the ceiling, in the criophore position, and is bounded by a series of concentric circles in red and blue decorative bands,

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66. Ibid. p. 55.

67. Catacomb of Domitilla, end of 2nd century. Plate 9, and in detail, plate 11 in Joseph Wilpert, Roma Sotteranea: le pitture della catacombe Romane illustrate (Roma, Desclee Lefebvre, 1903).

68. Cf. Eisler's comments on the Gallery of the Flavians in the catacomb of Domitilla which he claims to have the oldest specimens of Christian imagery, including images of the Fisher, trees, representations of funeral meals, a crosier, a lamb and a full milk pail. All of these he associates with Christian/Orpheus imagery. Orpheus the Fisher p. 61.

69. Catacomb of Domitilla, (Wilpert plate 11).

and by birds and floral designs. In this example there is no background, nor other sheep, nor trees. This example is highly decorative and abstract with little narrative quality.

The Good Shepherd in the Catacomb of Priscilla is not in the center of the ceiling, but is a part of a decorative band, with strips of geometric design above and below it.[70] The background is a rather dirty off-white, while the figure and sheep are painted in earth tones. The Shepherd holds a sheep over his shoulders, and there are sheep and trees on each side of him.

In the Catacomb of Lucina, red and blue lines divide geometric spaces that are more carefully designed and more complicated than in earlier paintings.[71] The figures are rendered in earth tones with a cool off-white background. In this case the center circle is occupied by a Daniel figure, orant with lions seated on each side. Heads reminiscent of theatre masks are part of decorative panels surrounding the center along with Good Shepherd figures which alternate with orants.

The Catacomb of Callisto has a similarly rendered ceiling in which the central circle is occupied by a Good Shepherd holding the sheep in both hands over his shoulders.[72] There is a noticeably higher technical quality about this painting than others previously described. The spaces are separated by carefully rendered floral boundaries, and floral

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70. Catacomb of Priscilla, first part of 3rd century. (Wilpert plate 21).

71. Catacomb of Lucina, first half 3rd century (Wilpert plate 25).

72. Catacomb of Callisto, second half 3rd century (Wilpert plate 38).

motifs and peacocks are used to decorate several of the panels. This figure shows more detail and sensitivity in rendering.

Bandinelli states that there is virtually no difference between pagan and Christian painting in the third and fourth centuries, other than iconography.[73] In third and fourth century catacomb painting there is more detail and sophistication shown than in earlier works.[74] An early third century example shows the Good Shepherd criophore with the feet held with his left hand, while with his right hand he holds a syrinx. Sheep reclining at his feet appear to be listening to him. He wears a cape and the traditional short tunic. As noted by Eisler, milk imagery is seen in a third century painting in the catacomb of Lucina, where the Shepherd is seen carrying a sheep over his shoulders and a milk pail in his right hand (illustration VI).[75]

Orphic imagery is clearly seen in a third century painting on the ceiling of the catacomb of Domitilla.[76] The Good

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73. Bandinelli, Late Empire. p. 86—Bandinelli states that early catacomb painting is modeled after interior decoration styles popular in 1st and 2nd century Roman homes. He states that in the 3rd century painters began to "break free" from tradition, and to become more expressionistic and symbolic.

74. Catacomb of Pietro Marcellino, first half 3rd century (Wilpert plate 63).

75. Catacomb of Lucina, 3rd century (Wilpert plate 66). Cf. Eisler plate 40, where he suggests that the milk pail is symbolic of "feeding" newly Baptized Chriatians. He states that in the 4th century catacomb of Proetextus, the pail is replaced by a cylindrical case, bearing book scrolls. This represents "feeding" the "flock" with the Word.

76. Catacomb of Domitilla, 3rd century (Eisler plate 28). Eisler suggests, in relation to this painting, that Orphic and Pythagorean symbolism are to be found. The name Emmanuel (cf. Isa. 11:1-6 where the Messiah is

Shepherd figure is seated, playing the lyre, with trees on either side of him and surrounded by animals. The figure is dressed in trousers, tunic, and phrygian cap. Other panels surrounding him include scenes from the Old Testament, and sheep and cattle.

In the mid-fourth century, a painting in the catacomb of Domitilla shows an almost fussy detail, including a more discernible facial expression.[77] In the rather expressionistic treatment of the trees and the dramatic use of red, brown and green tones, there is a tactile sense, unusual in such paintings.

This expressionistic style reaches a high point in a fourth century painting, in which the figure of the Good Shepherd is painted in dramatic tones of reddish-brown and yellow ochre.[78] There is a new sense of volume, and there is a sense of the figure having been set in a landscape rather than projected in mystical or "abstract" space, as in earlier paintings. Notable as well is the use of white for high lighting and detail — a technique which will be used extensively several centuries later in Byzantine and

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seen to be one who charms wild animals, and Matt. 1:23, where the virgin's child is to be called Emmanuel) is computed in numerological symbolism as follows: EMMANOYΛ =5+12+12+1+13+15+20+7+11=96, and ΘΡΙΕΥΣ =15+17+21+5+20+18=96. Such a coincidence could be used as an argument to convince Orphic and Pythagorean initiates that the Emmanuel prophesized in the Old Testament would be a reincarnation of the mystic Orpheus. The intimation, by Eisler, that the variation between Matthew's spelling of Emmanuel and Isaiah's (Immanu-el) is a proselytization ploy, seems to stretch credulity.

77. Catacomb of Domitilla, mid 4th century (Wilpert plate 117).

78. Catacomb of Domitilla, 4th century (Wilpert plate 190).

Russian icons.[79]

A late fourth century ceiling painting in the catacomb of Priscilla shows a very sophisticated use of background space, fine detailed line and generally more sensitive touch.[80] This painting lacks the crudeness of line and cluttered appearance of earlier works although the iconographical features, the sheep held with both hands, a sheep and tree at each side, short tunic and so on, are basically the same.

The Reading Shepherd and His Flock, mentioned in the last chapter, is a more unusual portrayal of the figure.[81] In this instance the Shepherd is bearded, wears a long tunic with vertical decorative stripes, is seated and reads from a scroll. He seems to "float" in a rather abstract space above an assortment of sheep in a vague pastoral setting.

In summary, one might say that the paintings in the catacombs, although subject to an obvious range in regard to the skill of individual painters, have a degree of unity. Through the centuries they tend to become more complex and detailed, more sophisticated and eventually more expressionistic in style. This, of course fluctuates, and some "older" looking (in terms of style) Shepherds are found among third and fourth century paintings. The iconography of the figure is

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79. The use of white as a high light on portraits is seen in various pre-Christian paintings, and is perhaps most notable in the Roman portraits associated with Fayum, which some authorities see as the precursor to Eastern Orthodoxy's icons.

80. Catacomb of Priscilla, second half of 4th century (Wilpert plate 42).

81. Hypogeum of the Aurelii, Rome, middle 3rd century (du Bourguet p. 41).

fairly consistent. The Shepherd usually has a short tunic, often has short hair and no beard, sometimes wears boots or leggins, and on occasion holds a staff, a crosier, a milk pail, pipes, and in rare instances has a cloak or cape. The predominant figuration is with a sheep carried over the shoulders in the criophore position.

The Figure of the Good Shepherd in Christian Visual Arts as Seen in Mosaic, Sculpture and the Minor Arts

Monuments other than those paintings and sarcophagi found in the catacombs are rare and generally yield little information regarding Shepherd imagery, although a few examples are worth note. A relatively rare free standing statuette, located in the Cleveland museum is one of these examples. The relationship of this figure, in style and execution, is similar to classical pagan sculpture, as was discussed in chapter one.[82]

Typical of Good Shepherd sculpture in this era is a Good Shepherd figure in the Louvre, which depicts the Shepherd as a young boy. This criophore figure has long curly hair, a short tunic, leggins, and a shepherd's bag on a strap over his shoulder.[83] Another interesting figure is the Brescia ivory reliquary, showing the Good Shepherd in an arched doorway of the sheepfold, the sheep behind the wall, and a wolf or dog in front of the door.[84]

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82. Good Shepherd marble statuette, Cleveland Museum Cleveland Ohio, second half 3rd century (du Bourguet p. 118).

83. Good Shepherd Sculpture, Louvre, Paris, late 3rd century (Grabar, plate 301).

84. Reliquary, Brescia Municipal Museum, mid to late 3rd century, (du Bourguet p. 177).

Dating from the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century, the statue of the Good Shepherd as a young boy in the Byzantine Museum in Athens, shows a youth in the Criophore pose, with very short hair, short tunic, and bare legs. This figure depicts a child of no more than ten or eleven years old.[85]

A rare floor mosaic image of the Good Shepherd shows the figure with crosier, cloak, trousers, a short tunic and what appears to be a halo.[86] Included in the composition are sheep, birds, and a milk pail. A similar figure, also a floor mosaic, is found in the Cathedral of Bp. Theodore in Aquileia. In this instance the Good Shepherd has short hair, no beard, and a syrinx. He is in the familiar criophore position, utilizing a rather classical stylized posture.[87]

Perhaps the most well known image of the Good Shepherd is the famous Ravenna mosaic of Galla Placidia.[88] This mosaic is one of the last of the early Christian Good Shepherd figures. The figure is shown seated, in a long tunic and with long hair, but unbearded. The tunic is gold and a purple mantle is draped over one shoulder and across his

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85. Sculpture of Good Shepherd, Byzantine Museum Athens, 4th or 5th century (Grabar, Plate 303).

86. Kraus, Das Römische Weltreich, plate XXIII. — This floor mosaic is unusual in that figures of Jesus in any form are rarely placed on the floor where people might possibly walk on them.

87. Mosaic of the Good Shepherd, pavement of the Cathedral of Bp. Aquile: N. Italy, Early 4th century (Grabar, plate 27).

88. Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna, first half of 5th century. See Rosella Vantagii, Ravenna (Narni, Terni, Plurigraf, 1977) p. 32.

lap. He has a nimbus (which is not cruciform) and holds a staff, the upper part of which becomes a cross.[89] There are three sheep on each side of him, and the setting is in stylized rocks and trees (illustration VII). In the Good Shepherd of the Mausoleum of Galla Placida, one finds what maybe considered to be one of the last examples of early Christian art.[90] Basically in the Hellenistic tradition, this Shepherd, sheep and back ground are portrayed in a mannered realism where nature takes second place to religion. Shortly thereafter in the same immediate area, in fact literally next door in the Basilica of San Vitale, Christian art will take the gigantic leap into Byzantine art.

The Good Shepherd also appears as decoration on terra cotta oil lamps,[91] engraved gem stones, and medallions.[92] The images used on these items run the same range in iconography as do the images found on the sarcophagi and paintings just described.

In Summary, the iconography of the catacomb paintings and the few odd mosaics and sculptures that exist, do not differ markedly in most respects from the sarcophagi of the catacombs, except in the fact that, taken over all, there seems to be less inclusion of pagan imagery in with Christian themes. Pagan imagery can be found to some extent it

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89. The nimbus enclosing a cross set behind Christ's head is a standard part of Byzantine iconography, but usually does not appear in early Christian art. A plain nimbus can occasionally be found, but is rare.

90. Gough, Origins of Christian Art, p. 93.

91. Leclerc, "Pasteur, Bon" Dictionnaire d'Archéologie, col. 2383.

92. Ibid., col. 2384-2390.

is true, but generally speaking it is somewhat less obviously a part of these paintings and mosaics than it is a part of the sarcophagi. This may be due to the commercial nature of sarcophagi art.

Pagan influences in both sarcophagi and paintings seem to stem more from Orphic tradition than from any other pagan source. In fact there is very little use of pagan imagery from the other pagan figures sometimes associated with pastoral themes. For example, the Hermes Criophore does not seem to have any direct effect on Christian imagery. One does not see Christian Shepherds with winged caps or sandals, caducuses or other such possible imagery. Yet the Orpheus lyre, syrinx, animals and sometimes the phrygian cap, do appear fairly often.[93] It seems evident that Orphic Shepherd imagery was more amenable to early Christian art, than was other pagan Shepherd imagery.

One of the secondary motifs that has been noted on several of the Christian monuments just described, is that of the Fisher. Obviously the imagery of fishing played an important role in New Testament tradition. Eisler documents a number of Orphic-Fisher connections which add to the compatibility of Orphic and Christian imagery. Also noted is a secondary theme of milk — milking ewes, milk pails and the like. Again Eisler notes similar connections to the milk theme in both Christian and Orphic imagery. He points out that examples of this imagery exists in the Sepulchre of Lucina, the Gallery of the Flavians and the Catacomb Ad Duas Lauros.[94] A theory that tends to support this idea somewhat

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93. Eisler, Orpheus Fisher p. 53.

94. Ibid. p. 65.

is Schiller's view that the Good Shepherd figure had special significance in relation to Baptism. She states that in early baptismal liturgies Jesus was invoked as savior in connection with his figure as Good Shepherd.[95] In her view the lambs surrounding the Good Shepherd are symbolic of the newly baptized. The relationship between Baptism and milk imagery is, of course, based on the early Christian practice of feeding the newly baptized with milk.[96]

Iconographical Features of the Good Shepherd as a Figure of Christ

One thing is certain, the figure of Christ as the Good Shepherd did not suddenly some into existence, fully developed in its most sophisticated form. It is clear that the figure of Christ as the Good Shepherd developed gradually over a number of years, and that there is a discernible pattern to the development. It is also clear that although there is a sense of uniformity in the development of the figure, there also is some amount of variation — there is in other words, room for individual artistic interpretation, especially in the catacomb paintings.

The development of the figure of the Good Shepherd seems to reflect the development of the Church and the development of her understanding of Christ. Generally speaking, the early figure of Christ is youthful but becomes, as Didron points out, "...older from century to century, in proportion as the age of Christianity itself progresses."[97]

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95. Gertrud Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art Vol. I (London, Lund & Humphries, 1971) p. 130.

96. See above p. 64.

97. Didron, Christian Iconography, p. 249.

The early figures of the Good Shepherd portray a young man, usually with attributes borrowed from paganism, symbolic of the fresh young Church newly come into existence, but not greatly different from pagan images.

> The symbolizing trend, an Oriental influence that affected Christian and pagan alike, had led the former to Christianize from within certain subjects of pagan origin. 98

As time progressed the image of the Good Shepherd became more specifically and uniquely Christian. Gradually the bearded Shepherd emerged, a figure more aged and sophisticated. The figure became less that of the classical shepherd, and more that of the Savior, God-become-man. The crosier, symbolic of authority, became more prominent.

The posture of the Shepherd varied, as he was portrayed sometimes seated, sometimes standing. Gradually the singing Orpheus was replaced by the preaching, ministering Christ. The sheep became more significant in their role as symbolic of the faithful: appearing sometimes as the martyrs, sometimes as the newly Baptized, and sometimes as the Church at large.

Although beyond the scope of this study, there are other figures of Christ found in early Christian art, and as the fifth century approaches some of them become more prominent, while the figure of the Good Shepherd becomes less popular.

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98. du Bourguet, Early Christian Art, p. 184. While one must acknowledge the debt owed to pagan iconography it must be stipulated that these "borrowings" were for the most part made judiciously. The commercial aspect of sarcophagi art may have lessened the opportunity for choice somewhat, but by and large, borrowed pagan imagery seems to have been carefully restricted to images that could be adopted to a wholly Christian usage, and which would provide the opportunity for apologetic and catechetic use.

Two of these other figures are worthy of note here: one is the figure of Christ as the Lamb of God, the Agnus Dei, the other is Christ as the Omnipotent Ruler, the Pantocrator. The Agnus Dei image appears late in early Christian art. Although related to the Good Shepherd figure in some senses, it has limited bearing on the iconography of the Good Shepherd as we are dealing with it here. The figure of Christ Pantocrator has more direct relevance to the present discussion and warrants some comment at this point.

The pagan roots of this image can be traced to the imagery of the Sun god. The worship of the Sun is perhaps one of the earliest forms of religion known to man. Sun worship stubbornly persevered and was present in varied forms in the early Christian era. In 274 Aurelian designated the cult of the Invincible Sun (Sol Invictus) as the state religion of the Roman Empire, assigning a clergy of high rank.[99] Thus the Sun God became associated with the emperor. There is evidence in early Christian art of a tendency to associate Christ with the Sun God. There is for example, the famous mosaic image of Christ ascending to Heaven in a chariot, in the cemetery under St. Peter's in Rome.[100] The image of Christ the Sun God, and Christ the Pantocrator have definite associations and are connected to imperial imagery and the cult of the emperors.[101] Grabar

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99. Donald Winslow, "Religion and the Early Roman Empire" Early Church History, ed. S. Benko & J. O'Rourke (London, Oliphants, 1972) p. 242.

100. Cemetery under St. Peter's Rome, 3rd-4th century, Cf. Grabar, Beginnings plate 74, p. 80.

101. Donald Bullough, "Images Regum and Their Significance in the Early Medieval West", Studies in Memory of David Talbot Rice, ed. Robertson and Henderson, (Edinburgh, Univ. Press, 1975) p. 224.

states that the rise of the imagery of Christ as ruler parallels the conversion of the emperors, and that with the ascendency of Constantine, imperial courtly images replaced the more rustic images of the earlier Christian period.[102]

In the art of the Byzantine period the image of the Good Shepherd all but disappears. He is replaced by a variety of forms, but one of the most significant of these forms is the image of Christ the Creator, Ruler and Judge of the Universe — Pantocrator. The kindly, humanistic Shepherd is replaced by the new image of Christ in terrible majesty. The Shepherd becomes the cosmic Ruler and the world enters a new age.

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102. Grabar, Christian Iconog. p. 42; Beginnings. p. 36.

IV

THE GOOD SHEPHERD IN PATRISTIC LITERATURE

ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλός, καὶ
γινώσκω τὰ ἐμὰ καὶ γινώσκουσί
με τὰ ἐμά. John 10:14

The statement attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of John, — "I am the Good Shepherd" — had immediate meaning for both Jews and Gentiles, being significant, in different ways to both groups. As this significance was not lost on the early Christian Fathers, the figure of the Good Shepherd was used both as a means of attracting non-Christians, and as a means of instructing new converts. Apologetic and catechetic use of the Good Shepherd figure appealed to the Messianic interest of the Jews, and to the Orphic-Savior interest of the pagans. As was pointed out, the Jews did not utilize themes of the Good Shepherd as a part of their visual arts tradition, presumably because of a fear of visual anthropomorphism leading to idolatry. However, they did have a strong literary tradition utilizing Shepherd imagery. The pagans having no such cultural inhibitions, utilized both visual and literary images of savior figures.

As far as the Jewish literary tradition is concerned, shepherds were important figures.[1] Significant characters such as Jacob, Rachel, Moses, and David all were associated

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1. It should be noted that in the Talmudic tradition the shepherd became a negative image rather than a positive image for a variety of cultural reasons. This does not alter the impact that ancient Jewish shepherd figures had on Jewish and Christian religious imagery in the first century.

at one time or another with the keeping of sheep.[2] At times even God Himself is visualized as a shepherd, as in the famous Twenty-third Psalm. The image of the Messiah as Shepherd of God's people has already been referred to.

Eisler notes pagan and Jewish similarities when he compares Orphic literary tradition with the Old Testament view of the Messiah.

> Empedokles' description of the blessed time long ago when the mythic Orpheus—Pythagoras lived, who had abolished the crime of devouring, killing and sacrificing living beings. At that time all were tame and friends of man —wild animals and birds as well—for love had bound their souls. 3

This can be compared with Isaiah's reference to the Messiah and the effect he will have on creation.

> The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. 4

The pagan world had idealized images of virtue and truth, but few real examples of these idealizations existed in actual practice. Angus suggests that one of the most potent appeals of Christianity was the image of Jesus as the realization of these very ideals.

> In an eminently practical age virtues were illustrated from the dramatis personae of history. The legendary Orpheus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Apollonius, Epicarus, and others were held before men's gaze to accompany and reinforce precepts. But a perfect example—where was such to be found? Hence, the stoic teachers, while drawing upon the records of the good and great men of the past, preferred to portray their ideal Wise Man, at the same time frankly ac-

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2. Universal Jewish Encyclopedia Vol. IX ed. Issac Landman (New York, Univ. Jewish Encyc. Co., 1948) p. 503.

3. Eisler, Orpheus Fisher p. 52.

4. Isaiah 11:6.

knowledging that he had never lived. 5 Christian apologists seized the opportunity to proclaim that the ideal Wise Man did in fact live, and was in fact Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ.

The apologetic tradition has its roots in no less a figure than that of St. Paul himself. Preaching in Athens he took advantage of an altar inscribed to the "unknown god" in an attempt to persuade the "pious" people of Athens that they were in fact already worshipping the unknowable and "hidden" god of the Jews, whose true worship had now been revealed to them through Jesus the Christ.[6]

Some early apologists acting on the principle that God had not left himself without witnesses in the pagan world, laid claim to the Stoic idea of an "all pervading divine logos" and cited such pagan "authorities" as the Sibyl, Hermes, and especially Orpheus. Other early Christian writers were more cautious, however, fearing an exaggeration of the Logos Doctrine might bring into Christianity an uncontrollable amount of pagan error.[7]

There were a number of similarities between Orphic belief and Christian belief, and as noted, early Christian writers utilized these similarities for apologetic and

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5. Angus, Mystery Religions p. 312.

6. Acts, 17:22-23. Paul began his interaction with the Greeks early in his ministry. The ninth chapter of Acts tells that Paul stayed with the Apostles and "spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed with the Greeks." The Greek text of Acts 28b and 29a yields "παρρησιαζόμενος ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Κυρίου, ἐλάλει τε καὶ συνεζήτει πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνιστάς." The vulgate tells us that he spoke "also to the Gentiles and argued with the Greeks": "Loquebatur quoque Gentibus et disputabat cum Graecis."

7. Eisler, Orpheus Fisher p. 54.

catechetic purposes. Eisler lists Orphic beliefs which were compatible with Christian beliefs as including: a concept of original sin, a pessimistic view of terrestrial life, a view of the body as a prison or grave for the soul, an eschatology including a heaven and a hell, purgations and a final retribution or expiation of sin, a priestly ritual, a sacrament of the cup, a Logos doctrine, a belief in a suffering god, and worship with theophagic communion rites.[8]

In Patristic use, the figure of the Shepherd serves a variety of purposes, being used to illustrate the nature of Christ, his mission in the world, and his relationship to his people. Use of the figure of the Good Shepherd falls roughly into two categories, the first being the use of the figure of the Shepherd specifically to illustrate Christ's nature and work, and the second being the use of the figure of the Shepherd in relation to subsidiary themes. Patristic use of the figure of the Good Shepherd as an illustration of the nature and work of Christ will be considered first.

Patristic Use of the Figure of the Good Shepherd to Illustrate the Nature and Work of Christ

Good Shepherd imagery illustrative of the nature and work of Christ can be divided into five themes, although it must be understood that these divisions are somewhat arbitrarily drawn for the sake of convenience of discussion. There is overlap and ambiguity in Patristic use of the Shepherd figure in general. It is, after all, in the nature of imagery to be somewhat abstract. For the sake of this discussion the first three themes will be grouped together. They include the Good Shepherd: 1) as Instructor or Teacher, 2) as Redeemer and

3) as Judge. The remaining two themes include the Good Shepherd used as a unifying figure, linking Jewish and pagan thought to Christianity, and the Good Shepherd used in christological expositions to illustrate the relationship of Christ to the Trinity. The first three themes are drawn primarily from scripture, especially Luke 15 and John 10, and are direct examples of the work or action of the Shepherd.

The initial theme to be considered is the figure of the Good Shepherd as Teacher/Shepherd, figured as: a) Teaching by example (the work and action of the Shepherd is to be emulated by the flock) and, b) Teaching by feeding (the parables and lessons of the Shepherd serve to instruct and develop the flock). Among the earliest of Christian Patristic writings, the image of Christ figured as Teacher/Shepherd is used to teach moral behavior by example. Clement, writing to the Church in Corinth, uses this figure to admonish the rebellious and unruly.[9] "Christ is with those of humble mind not with those who exalt themselves over his flock".[10] The image of the Good Shepherd is never ostentatious, nor is there the awesome regality of the later figure of the Pantocrator.

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9. Henry Bettenson, The Early Christian Fathers (London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1969) p. 2. Opinions vary as to who Clement actually was. Bettenson notes it has been suggested that Clement was variously: a) Titus Flavius Clemens, the husband of Domitilla; b) a freedman of the household of Clemens and Domitilla; c) an early bishop of Rome; or d) the Clement of Philippians 4:3. If one or the other connections with Domitilla is accurate, the intriguing possibility of an association with the well-known catacomb is raised.

10. Epistle to the Corinthians, 16 (Bettenson, Early Fathers, p. 29).

Ignatius of Antioch, writing about the first decade of the second century uses the figure of the Teacher/Shepherd to warn the Philadelphians against false teaching, and to inspire them to follow the true teaching of the Shepherd; for false teachers are wolves who will capture the sheep. By contrast, the Good Shepherd provides the safety of true teaching:

> Wherefore as becomes children of light and truth, flee divisions and false doctrines; for where the shepherd is, there do ye as sheep follow after, For many wolves,[11] which appear worthy of belief, do through the allurements of evil pleasure lead captive those that run in the course of God. 12

Working in Carthage at the close of the second and beginning of the third century, Tertullian, a former pagan lawyer, brings both rigor and vitality to the Patristic writing of the Latin Church in this era. Using the figure of the Good Shepherd, as Clement did, to teach moral behavior by example, Tertullian writes on the desirability of patience as a Christian virtue.

> The shepherd's patience seeks and finds the straying ewe: for Impatience would easily dispise one ewe; but Patience undertakes the labor of the quest, and the patient burden-bearer carries home on his shoulders the forsaken sinner. 13

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11. Matt. 7:15: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps clothing, but inwardly they are raving wolves."

12. Epistle to the Philadelphians, 2. Translated by Temple Chevallier, The Epistles of Clement of Rome, Polycarp & Ignatius (London, Rivington & Deighton, 1851) p. 99. ὅπου δὲ ὁ ποιμήν ἐστιν, ἐκεῖ ὡς πρόβατα ἀκολουθεῖτε. Πολλοὶ γὰρ λύκοι ἀξιόπιστα ἡδονῇ κακῇ αἰχμαλωτίζουσι τοὺς θεοδρόμους· Ignatii Epistolae, Patrologiae Graecae, Tomus V, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, Apudgarnier Frates, 1894) p. 697.

13. Of Patience, in The Writings of Tertullian Vol. I, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, ed. Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clar, 1867) p. 224.

Another example of the Shepherd as a Teacher of moral behavior is found in Tertullian's discussion of how Christians should behave in face of persecution.

For Tertullian, a point of concern was the fact that many people including clergy, were fleeing to avoid arrest and possible martyrdom. Writing on the theme that clergy should set an example following that of Christ, and should be ready to die for the faith, he figures Christ as the ultimate example of the Good Shepherd.

> Most assuredly a good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, according to the word of Moses, when the Lord Christ had not as yet been revealed, but was already shadowed forth in himself: "If you destroy this people," he says, "destroy me also along with it."[14] But Christ, confirming these foreshadowings Himself adds:[15] "The bad shepherd is he who, on seeing the wolf, flees, and leaves the sheep to be torn to pieces." 16

In the mid-third century, in the face of the Decian persecution, Cyprian the Bishop of Carthage was forced to flee his see. During his absence the clergy of Rome wrote to their Latin brethren in Carthage urging them to follow the example of fortitude seen in the teaching of the Good Shepherd.

> ...and then also the Lord Himself fulfilling what had been written in the law and the prophets, teaches, saying, "I am the Good Shepherd who lay down my life for the sheep. But the hireling, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf scattereth them." To Simon, too, He speaks thus: "Lovest thou me?" He answered, "I do love thee." He saith to him, "Feed my sheep." 17

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14. See Exodus 32:32.

15. See John 10:12.

16. On Flight in Persecution, Chpt. 11 (The Writings of Tertullian, Vol. I, p. 371).

17. Letter from the Roman Clergy to the Carthaginian Clergy, about the Retirement of the Blessed Cyprian, Epistle II,

Shifting focus from the Western Church to the Greek Fathers of the late second and early third centuries, one sees an example of the figure of the Teacher/Shepherd feeding the flock in Clement's The Instructor. On the theme that both men and women are under the Instructor's charge, Clement writes:

> Ἄρνες, too, the word for lambs, is a common name of simplicity for the male and female animal. Now the Lord Himself will feed us as His flock for ever. Amen. But without a shepherd, neither can sheep nor any other animal live, nor children without a tutor, nor domestics without a master. 18

Clement writes further that the Instructor's teaching feeds the flock as children are fed,. using the figure of lambs as an image of the faithful who are nourished by the Shepherd.[19] Finally Clement goes into detail stating that the Instructor is Christ, the Good Shepherd:

> He is called Jesus. Sometimes He calls Himself a shepherd, and says, "I am the Good Shepherd." According to a metaphor drawn from shepherds, who lead the sheep, is hereby understood the Instructor who leads the children—the Shepherd who tends the babes. For the babes are simple being figuratively described as sheep. "And they shall all", it is said, "be one flock, and one shepherd." The Word, then, who leads the children to salvation, is appropriately called the Instructor (παιδαγωγός).[20]

In the mid-third century Origen uses the figure of the Shepherd to teach that Christians worship only God and His Word the Son, quoting from the tenth chapter of John:

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in Robert E. Wallis, The Writings of Cyprian Vol. I, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, p. 15.

18. The Instructor, Bk. I, Chpt. 4 in William Wilson, The Writings of Clement of Alexandria, Vol. I, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, p. 121.

19. Ibid., Chpt. 5 (Wilson, Vol. I, p. 125).

20. Ibid., Chpt. 7 (Wilson, Vol. I, p. 149).

> A man who is going to give a good answer to this point, in order to defend the Christians who avoid worshipping anything other than the supreme God and His Logos, the first born of all creation, needs to explain the saying, "All who came before me were thieves and robbers, and the sheep did not hear them. 21

The second Good Shepherd theme to be considered is that of the Redeemer/Shepherd. As Redeemer, Christ is also styled as High Priest and Door by Ignatius, writing in the second century. Commenting first that the Old Testament priests are good, but that the priesthood of the New Testament is better, he says:

> The Priests themselves are good, but much better is the High Priest, to whom only hath been committed the Holy of Holies, to whom alone have been entrusted the secret things of God. He is the door of the Father, by which enter in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the prophets, and the Apostles and the Church. 22

This same passage as rendered in the more dubious "long version", or as Lightfoot calls it "long recension", is more extensive in the use of Good Shepherd imagery:

> The Comforter is holy, and the Word is holy, the Son of the Father, by whom He made all things, and exercised a providence over them all. This is the Way[23] which leads to the Father, the Rock,[24] the Defense, the Key, the

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21. Origen, Against Celsus in Henry Chadwick, Origen: Contra Celsum (Cambridge, Univ. Press, 1965) p. 453.

22. Epistle to the Philadelphians, 9 (Chevallier, p. 102)
Καλοὶ καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς, κρεῖσσον δὲ ὁ ἀρχιερεύς, ὁ πεπιστευμένος τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων, ὃς μόνος πεπίστευται τὰ κρυπτὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ· αὐτὸς ὢν θύρα τοῦ Πατρός...
Migne, p. 704
Compare with John 10:7, "Then saith Jesus unto them again, 'Verily verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the Sheep."

23. See John 14:6: "...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

24. See I Cor. 10:4: "For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

> Shepherd, the Sacrifice,[25] the Door[26] of Knowledge, through which have entered Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, Moses and all the company of prophets. 27

Irenaeus ties together, in a brief passage, the image of Christ as the Sacrificial Lamb, as the Shepherd gathering his flock, and as the Redeemer or Savior of the dead; the latter with obvious Orphic overtones as well.

> He became a Man in affliction, knowing how to bear weakness, and sitting on the foal of an ass; the stone set at nought by the builders, and as a sheep led to the slaughter, and by the stretching out of His hands scattering Amalek and gathering His Dispersed Sons from the ends of the earth into His Father's sheepfold, and calling to mind His dead who had before fallen asleep, and going down to them, to deliver them and save them. 28

The image of Christ as Redeemer/Shepherd is combined with healing in Irenaeus' comments in Book Five. Referring first to the healing of the blind man with spittle and clay, he then goes on to say:

> ...knowing that that which formed us in the beginning, and now forms us in the womb, the Hand of God—the same in the last times sought us out when we were lost, gaining His own lost sheep, and taking it on His shoulders, and with gratu-

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25. See John 10:11: "I am the Good Shepherd: The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

26. See John 10:9: "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasturage."

27. Translated by Roberts and Donaldson in The Apostolic Fathers, Vol. I, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, p. 235. Cf. οὗτός ἐστιν ἡ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα ἄγουσα ὁδός, ἡ πέτρα, ὁ φραγμός ἡ κλείς, ὁ ποιμήν, τὸ ἱερεῖον, ἡ θύρα της γνώσεως, δι' ἧς εἰσῆλθον Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ, Μωσῆς καὶ ὁ σύμπας τῶν προφητῶν χόρος,
J. B. Lightfoot in The Apostolic Fathers Part II (London, Macmillian & Co., 1885) p. 800. Lightfoot considers the "Long Recension" version of the Epistle to the Philadelphians as being actually written by Ignatius, but with "interpolations and alterations". Ibid. p. 712.

28. Against Heresies, Bk. 4, Chpt. 22:1 translated by John Keble, Five Books of Irenaeus (Oxford, James Parker & Co. 1872) p. 404.

lation restoring it to the troop of life. 29

Clement of Alexandria utilizes the theme of the Redeemer/Shepherd in combination with the image of Christ as Creator, quoting both John 1, and John 10.

> "For all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made,"[30] — and with benevolence, for He alone gave Himself a sacrifice for us. "For the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep,"[31] and He has so given it. 32

Tertullian, in the Latin tradition, in his treatise On Repentance, writes that the Lord is willing to forgive the repentant sinner, as seen in the action of the Shepherd:

> There strays, withal, one little ewe of the Shepherd's; but the flock was not more dear than the one: that one is earnestly sought; the one is longed for instead of all; and at length she is found, and is borne back on the shoulders of the shepherd himself; for much she has toiled in straying. 33

In this same vein, Origen uses the Redeemer/Shepherd theme in his Homily on Numbers:

> One sheep had been lost out of one hundred sheep, but this sheep the Good Shepherd, leaving the ninety-nine on the mountains, coming down to this our valley of tears, sought and found and carried back on his shoulders, and added it to the number of those who had remained safe in high places. 34

As Redeemer/Shepherd, Christ gathers the "irrationally moving souls" of the flock into his safe keeping. Origen expresses

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29. Against Heresies, Bk. 5, Chpt. 15:2 (Keble, p. 486)

30. John 1:3

31. John 10:11

32. The Instructor, Bk. I, Chpt. 11 (Wilson, Vol. I, p.180)

33. On Repentance, Chpt. 8 (The Writings of Tertullian Vol. I, p. 272).

34. Homily on Numbers, 19, 4 (Smith, Ante-Nicene Exeg. Vol. IV, p. 129).

this theme in his Homily on Jeremiah.[35] He then goes on to quote John 10:27 (the sheep hear my voice) and John 10:11 (I am the Good Shepherd). According to Daniélou, Origen described the Word of God, Christ, by using a variety of titles to illustrate his variety in nature and ministry. This is to indicate that the various titles give us an image of the multifaceted character of the Incarnate Word. Such names as Wisdom, Word, Truth and Life denote the Word as he is eternally in himself. Other names are bound up in the economy of the Redemption: to the sick the Word will appear as Healer, to the lost he will appear as the Shepherd. Daniélou states that Origen's theology of the Word is simply a catalogue of the different names, "the unfathomable riches of Christ".[36] In Origen's commentary on John, he writes that one refers to Christ by the title that fits one's need — and Christ responds in kind.

> You are fortunate indeed if you have no need to call the Son of Man Redeemer or Shepherd when you pray to him, happy if you need not ask him as Doctor to heal your sick soul. 37

Origen quotes John extensively in giving a list of the various titles of Christ.

> I am the Light of the World. I am the Way and the Truth and Life. I am the Resurrection. I am the Door, I am the Good Shepherd, and in the Revelation, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. 38

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35. Homily on Jeremiah, 5, 6 (Migne, P. G. Vol. 13-303C).

36. Jean Daniélou, Origen (London, Sheed & Ward, 1955) p. 258.

37. Commentary on John, I, 20 (Danielou p. 258).

38. Commentary on John, I, 4 taken from the Greek Text edited by A. Brooke, The Commentary of Origen on St. John's Gospel Vol. I, (Cambridge Press, 1896, p. 26). Cf. John 8:12, 14:6, 11:25, 10:9 & 11, and Rev. 22:13.

This theme is repeated two other times in this same general section of the commentary.[39] Malherbe and Ferguson note that lists of the titles of Christ are used as a catechetical device in the writing of several of the early Fathers, including not only Origen, but Justin Martyr, Melito, Cyril, and the Cappadocians.[40]

Perhaps one of the best examples of the figure of Redeemer/Shepherd is seen when Origen writes:

> Since it is not possible to come to be in the Father or with the Father without first ascending from below to the Godhead of the Son, through which one can be conducted even to the Father's blessedness, the Savior is described as Door. But being kind to men and welcoming at any time the inclination to better things of the souls of those who do not strive eagerly for reason, but like a sheep have gentleness and meekness not deliberate (ἐξηταγμένον) but unreasoning, He becomes a Shepherd; for "the Lord saves men and beasts". [41]

There are several other references to Christ as Redeemer/Shepherd in this work by Origen.[42]

The Eastern Fathers of the fourth century tend to use the figure of the Good Shepherd less frequently than earlier writers, preferring to use Shepherd imagery to figure the clergy instead. There are still some examples of Christ as Good Shepherd in their writing however. A relatively rare

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39. Cf. Tom I:20 and 21.

40. A. J. Malherbe, and E. Ferguson, Gregory of Nyssa: The Life of Moses (New York, Paulist Press, 1978) p. 180. References cited are: Justin, Dial. 4; 126; Melito, Peri Pascha, pp. 103-105; Cyril, Cat. Lect. 10 (MG 33.660-90); Greg. Naz., Or. 1.6-7 (MG 35, 400 B-C); Greg. Ny., Life of Moses II, 177, and Treats. on Perfection.

41. Commentary on John, I, 27 (Smith, Ante-Nicene Exeg. Vol. IV, p. 13).

42. See Origen's Commentary on John: 1:37, 19:4, 20:8, 33, 44 and 28:21.

instance of the use of the Redeemer/Shepherd can be seen in this example taken from the writings of Athanasius:

> He, the Image of the Father, came and dwelt in our midst, in order that he might renew mankind made after Himself, and seek out His lost sheep, even as He says in the Gospel:[43] "I came to seek and to save that which was lost". [44]

Another, rather rare example of late usage of the Redeemer/Shepherd is found in this example taken from Gregory of Nyssa's Life of Moses:

> But just as all the other names, in keeping with what is being specified, are each used piously to express the divine power—as, for example, physician, shepherd, protector, bread, wine, door, mansion, water, rock, spring, and whatever other designations are used of him—in the same way he is given the predicate "tabernacle" in accord with a signification fitting to God. [45]

It is obvious that in this usage the figure of the Shepherd is combined with several other figures and cast in a relatively minor role.

Finally, in the Western tradition, Augustine writing on the theme that Christ is the salvation of God uses the Redeemer/Shepherd and says:

> Who hath made in Himself of twain one new man, making peace, the good tidings of which He, Day from Day, preached unto those who were nigh, and those who were far off, having made both one; and bringing other sheep who are not of this fold, that there may be one flock and one shepherd. [46]

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43. See Luke 19:10.

44. The Incarnation of the Word of God, 14 (translated by a Religious of C.S.M.V. in The Incarnation of the Word of God (London, Geo. Bliss, The Centenary Press, 1944) p. 42.

45. Life of Moses, Bk. III, Chpt. 177 (Malherbe & Ferguson, Greg. of Ny.: Life of Mos. p. 99).

46. Augustine, Commentary of Psalm 106:36 in Expositions on the Book of Psalms Vol. V, Library of the Fathers (London, Oxford Press, 1853, p. 187).

Noting that the work of Christ is never ending, Augustine says that the Shepherd constantly seeks his sheep.

> But it is still being sought, let it still be sought, partly found let it still be sought. For as to that company, among whom the Psalmist saith, I do not forget Thy commandments, it hath been found; but through those who choose the commandments of God, gather them together, love them, it is still sought, and by means of the blood of its Shepherd shed and sprinkled abroad it is found in all nations. [47]

Augustine also writes that Christ as Redeemer/Shepherd shows the relative unimportance of the earthly life compared with the spiritual life by laying down his life for the sheep.[48] In musing over his own conversion Augustine notes the impressiveness of Christ's Redeeming work again using the Redeemer/Shepherd figure.[49]

The early Church, reflecting on the words of Jesus in John's Gospel, "the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep",[50] saw in the Passion of Jesus, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. The prophet Zechariah, in a dramatic discourse on Divine Judgement, fortells the striking of the Shepherd which becomes a variation on the Redeemer/Shepherd theme.

> Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little

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47. Commentary of Psalm 119: Dis. 32, 7 (Exp. on Bk. of Ps. Vol. V, p. 457).

48. Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, Bk. I, chpt. 15:42 in Marcus Dods The Works of Augustine Vol. VIII (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1873). p. 34.

49. Confessions: Bk. VIII, Chpt. 3, 6 in Albert C. Outler, Augustine: Confessions and Enchiridion (London, SCM Press Ltd., 1955) p. 161.

50. John 10:11. See also verses 15 and 17.

ones.[51]

This, the figure of the Redeemer/Shepherd struck, is found very early in Christian writing. The Epistle of Barnabas quotes Isaiah 53:5-7, figuring Christ as the Sacrificial Lamb,[52] and goes on to cite the Zechariah passage and to figure Christ as the Shepherd struck.[53]

Justin Martyr also uses this imagery writing that the Old Testament prophecy has been fulfilled in Christ.

> Hence also we are strong in His faith and doctrine, since we have persuasion both from the prophets, and from those who throughout the world are seen to be worshippers of God in the name of the crucified one. The following is said too, by Zechariah: (there follows the quote from Zech. 13:7) [54]

Tertullian, writing that clergy should not flee persecution, cites the example of Christ as the Shepherd willing to die for the sheep, and also notes Exodus 32:32, that the leader and his flock are inseparable.[55] Tertullian misquotes Zechariah by making shepherd plural so that he can change the figure from that of Christ to that of the clergy, in his exhortation against flight under persecution:

> Thus Zechariah threatens, Arise, O sword, against the shepherds, and pluck ye out the sheep; and I will turn by hand against the shepherds. And against them both Ezekiel

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51. Zechariah 13:7.

52. The figure of the Sacrificial Lamb or the Agnus Dei is often combined with the figure of the Redeemer/Shepherd struck. The Sacrificial Lamb is not a true shepherd figure and is outside of the scope of this paper.

53. Epistle of Barnabas, Chpt. 5, in Roberts, Donaldson and Crombie The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, pp. 108-9.

54. Dialogue with Trypho, 53, in Roberts & Donaldson, Justin Martyr and Athenagoras, Ante-Nicene Christian Library p. 155.

55. On Flight in Persecution, 11, (The Writings of Tertullian Vol. I, p. 371).

> and Jeremiah declaim with kindred threatenings, for their not only wickedly eating of the sheep, —they feeding themselves rather than those committed to their charge, —but also scattering the flock, and, giving it over shepherdless, a prey to all the beasts of the field. And this never happens more than when in persecution the church is abandoned by the clergy. 56

Cyprian of Carthage writes on the theme that Christ died for the "flock", and also quotes the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, combining the imagery of Shepherd and Lamb.[57]

The third Good Shepherd theme is that of the Judge/Shepherd. In this image Christ is seen as the source of Divine Law, and as its final arbiter. Hippolytus of Rome states that the sheep must beware of finding themselves in the wrong flock. "Beware, then, lest, being found in the flock of Jesus, you be set apart when gifts are sent to Esau, and be given over to Esau as reprobate and unworthy of the spiritual Jacob."[58]

The Judge/Shepherd is rather severly seen in Tertullian, who has little sympathy for sinning Christians. His scorn for liberal tendencies within the Church is obvious in his writings. Apparently some of the more liberal thinkers had justified their feelings by referring to the parable of the Lost Sheep in Luke. Tertullian replies that such justification is a misinterpretation of this parable. In his interpretation the lost sheep is a figure of the pagan sinner, not the Christian sinner.

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56. Ibid.

57. Testimonies Against the Jews, 15, in Robert E. Wallis, The Writings of Cyprian, Bp. of Carthage Vol. II, Ante-Nicene Christian Library.

58. Commentary of Psalm 77, Fragment 48,(Hippolytus Bishop of Rome Vol. I, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, p. 429).

> You shall have leave to begin with the parables, where you have the lost ewe re-sought by the Lord, and carried back on His shoulders, Let the very paintings upon your cups come forward to show whether even in them the figurative meaning of the sheep will shine through (the outward semblance, to teach) whether a Christian or heathen sinner be the object it aims at in the matter of restoration. 59

He continues on to say that the pagan sinner is the subject of the Shepherd's search, and that the flock is a figure of all mankind, not just the Christian community.

> Tell me, is not all mankind one flock of God? Is not the same God both Lord and Shepherd of the universal nations? Who more "perishes" from God than the heathen, so long as he errs? Who is more "resought" by God than the heathen, when he is recalled by Christ? 60

A special object of contempt for Tertullian is the Shepherd of Hermas, which he saw as a treatise in defense of liberalism. In his refutation of this work, he uses Shepherd imagery in a continuation of the argument begun above. Tertullian claims that Hermas has been condemned by "every council", and states that the followers of this teaching excessively emphasize the concept that God is good to the point of distortion. He contrasts the shepherd figure of Hermas with that of the invincible true Shepherd. In this highly figurative discourse he likens the doctrine of the liberals to a cup to be drunk, the cup containing a false image of the shepherd — in contrast he states that he drinks of the cup of the true and indestructable shepherd.[61] In this passage he infers an invalidity in the communion of

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59. On Modesty, Chpt. 7, (Writings of Tertullian Vol. III, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, p. 70).

60. Ibid., (p. 71).

61. On Modesty, Chpt. 10 (Writings of Tertullian Vol. III, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, p. 83).

these liberals — implying in effect that they are unable to taste of the true fruit of Christ. Sarcastically he says that the image of the shepherd on the chalices of the liberals is an image of the false shepherd, and not an image of the True one.

> But I would yield my ground to you if the scripture of "the Shepherd", which is the only one which favors adulterors, had deserved to find a place in the Divine canon; if it had not been habitually judged by every council of Churches (even of your own) among apocryphal and false (writing); itself adulterous, and hence a patroness of its comrades; from which in other respects, too, you derive initiation; to which, perchance, that "Shepherd" will play the patron whom you depict upon your (sacramental) chalice, (depict I say, as) himself withal a prostitutor of the Christian sacrament, (and hence) worthily both the idol of drunkenness, and the prize of adultery, by which the chalice will quickly be followed, (a chalice) from which you sip nothing more readily than (the flavour of) the "ewe" of (your) second repentence! I, however, inbibe the scriptures of that Shepherd who cannot be broken.[62]

Referring to another argument used by the liberal advocates, that of Paul's admonition to the Corinthians to forgive sinners,[63] Tertullian uses the figure of the Judge/Shepherd as drawn from the gospel of Matthew where Christ is fig-

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62. Ibid. Note that some authors have attempted to interpret this passage to mean that Tertullian was opposed to the portrayal of religious themes in the visual arts. See for example N. H. Baynes, "The Icons Before Iconoclasm" Harvard Theological Review, Vol. XLIV, 1951. While it is clear that Tertullian strongly opposes the liberal tendencies he attributes to the Shepherd of Hermas, making a case for Tertullian being an iconoclast, based on this passage, seems a dubious thesis. See Sr. Charles Murry, "Art and the Early Church" Journal of Theological Studies Vol. XXVIII, 1977. One can note a counter argument on the part of Jerome who refutes the idea that there are some sins which the blood of Christ cannot redeem, by referring to the figure of the Good Shepherd who "carried" the whole flock. See the discussion of this point in Dictionnaire d'Archeologie chretienne, Vol. 13 Col. 2275.

63. See II Corinth. 2:5-11.

ured as the Shepherd separating the sheep from the goats.[64]

> And do you, good shepherd and blessed father that you are, to bring about the (desired) end of the man, grace your harangue with all the allurements of mercy in your power, and under the parable of the "ewe" go in quest of your goats? 65

In Clement of Alexandria, the Shepherd is not only Judge but Law giver. Writing on this theme, he states that the law of Moses is superior to the teaching of the Greeks, but that the Law given by Christ is superior even to the law of Moses. Clement quotes John 10:11 and then goes on to say:

> As then we say it belongs to the shepherd's art to care for the sheep; for so "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" so also we shall say that legislation, in as much as it presides over and cares for the flock of men, establishes the virtue of men, by fanning into flame, as far as it can, what good there is in humanity. And if the flock figuratively spoken of as belonging to the Lord is nothing but a flock of men, then He Himself is the Good Shepherd, and Law giver of the one flock, of the sheep who hear Him, the one who cares for them "seeking" and "finding" by the law and the word, "that which was lost", since in truth the law is spiritual and leads to felicity. 66

The first three themes, which have just been considered, were examples of the work or action of the Good Shepherd and were drawn directly from Biblical imagery. The next two Shepherd themes are illustrative of theological thought: A response on the part of the early Fathers to Biblical imagery in light of the particular circumstances of their times. The first of these "response-themes" is the figure of the Good Shepherd as Unifier/Shepherd — linking the Jewish and pagan

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64. See Matt. 25:31-33.

65. On Modesty, Chpt. 13,(Writings of Tertullian Vol. III, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, p. 87).

66. The Miscellanies, Bk. I, Chpt. 26, (Wilson, Vol. I, p. 462).

shepherd figures with the Christian Shepherd. In order to understand this figure it is necessary to examine briefly the situation in which the Church found herself in the second and third centuries.

As was pointed out in Chapter Two, early Christian apologists placed great emphasis on raising the status of Christianity by comparing it with pagan philosophy and claiming its superiority to the more superstitious pagan religions. In the second century Justin Martyr is among the first to attempt to make Christianity "respectable" in the eyes of the more sophisticated pagans, by describing it as a philosophy.[67] For example, in the Dialogue he writes:

> ... for philosophy is in fact, the greatest possession, and most honorable before God, to whom it leads us and alone commends us; and these are truly holy men who have bestowed attention on philosophy. 68

According to Bettenson, Justin's writings were based on the idea that before the advent of Christianity, bits and pieces of Truth had been available to pagan mankind through a kind of "Divine Reason", and at the coming of Christ these pieces were combined with the greater message of the Gospel.

> He shows us an educated man of the second century seeking to commend the faith to others of like interest and the same background of culture.[69]

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67. Wilkin, "Collegia, Philosophical Schools, and Theology", p. 275.

68. Dialogue with Trypho, 2,(Roberts and Donaldson, Justin Martyr and Athenagoras, p. 87). Migne, Patrologia Gracae, Vol. 6 yields:
Ἔστι γὰρ τῷ ὄντι φιλοσοφία μέγιστον κτῆμα, καὶ τιμιώτατον Θεῷ ᾧ τε προσέχει καὶ συνίστησιν ἡμᾶς μόνη· καὶ ὅσοι ὡς ἀληθῶς οὗτοί εἰσιν, οἱ φιλοσοφίᾳ τὸν νοῦν προσεσχηκότες.

69. Bettenson, Early Fathers, p. 10.

As was noted, the figure of the Good Shepherd as Unifier/Shepherd was especially useful as an appeal to pagans already familiar with the Orphic Shepherd figure. In Justin's writing one can find references to Orphic imagery and belief which could be used to support the concept of monotheism and to draw pagans to Christianity.

> Even Orpheus, too, who introduces three hundred and sixty gods, will bear testimony in my favor from the tract called Diathecae, in which he appears to repent of his errors... 70

Justin goes on to quote a long passage from Orphic literature which includes the words:

> Look to the one and universal King, One, Self-begotten, and the only One, of whom all things and we ourselves, are sprung. 71

In this same treatise, he quotes a number of other pagan authors on the same theme: that their writings prefigure the coming of Christ. This same theme is also found in the Apology. After citing a number of parallels to Christian belief in pagan mythology, Justin writes:

> My purpose is to establish that our beliefs, which we have received from Christ and the prophets who proceeded him, are the sole truth and are anterior to all these chronicles; and that we claim acceptance not because our teaching coincides with theirs, but because it is the truth. 72

In the Apology, Justin goes so far as to say that the pagan authors, whom he sees as prefiguring the teachings of Christ in their writing, were in fact Christians by virtue of their participation in the prefigurement of the

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70. The Sole Government of God, Chpt. 2,(Roberts & Donaldson, Justin Martyr and Athenagoras, p. 331).

71. Ibid. (p. 332).

72. Apology I, 18,(Bettenson p. 60).

Word.[73] Justin compares the pagan shepherd, Orpheus, with the Christian Shepherd, for the purpose of leading pagans into the Sheepfold of the Good Shepherd, Christ.

Irenaeus, like Justin, utilizes both Jewish and pagan imagery to show that Christ fulfills the expectations of both groups. The Unifier/Shepherd figure is alluded to when Irenaeus says that Christ came into the world to gather all things unto himself. One visualizes the Shepherd gathering his flock around him. Although the terms Shepherd and flock are not mentioned in the following passage, the inference is not unlike the imagery of the Shepherd and Flock which will appear specifically in later passages.

> He the Invisible made visible, and the Incomprehensible made comprehensible, and the Impossible made capable of suffering, and the Word made Man, gathering up all unto Himself.[74]

The figure of the Good Shepherd with Orphic overtones is found in the nineteenth chapter of Book Three. Here Christ is described as the Savior who, like the Shepherd in the fifteenth chapter of Luke, seeks the lost sheep. Echoing Paul's letter to the Ephesians, Irenaeus says that Christ decended into the "lower parts of the earth".[75] Orphic tradition also includes a decent into the underworld to save someone "lost".

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73. Apology I, 46 in G. J. Davie, The Works of Justin Martyr (London, J. H. & Jason Parker, 1861) p. 35.

74. Against Heresies, Bk. 3, Chpt. 16:8 (Keble, Five Books of S. Irenaeus p. 404). Note that in this passage the phrase "gathering up all unto Himself" occurs three times in short succession.

75. Ephesians 4:9, "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also decended first into the lower parts of the earth?"

> ... and should descend "into the lower parts of the earth," seeking the "sheep which was lost" (which indeed was His own creation); and then that He should ascend up on high, offering and commending to His Father that Man who has been found; [76]

In the image of the Christ "ascending up on high" it is not difficult to visualize the figure of the Good Shepherd of the catacombs, with the lamb upon his shoulders.

A rather severe conservative, Tertullian was not so inclined, as other Patristic writers, to appeal to pagan similarities to Christian faith and worship as an apologetic means. He writes, "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" and further on, "away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic or dialectic composition."[77] Although Winslow notes Tertullian's reference to the Eleusian rites as a "baptism",[78] this reference is in the context of a rather sarcastic comment on the futility of pagan religion and the superiority of Christianity.

> Moreover, by carrying water around, and sprinkling it, they everywhere expiate country-seats, houses, temples, and whole cities: at all events, at the Apollinarian and Eleusinian games they are baptized; and they presume that the effect of their doing that is their regeneration, and the remission of the penalties due to their perjuries.

Tertullian continues:

> If men think that water is endued with a medicinal virtue by religion, what religion is more effectual than that of the living God? Which fact being acknowledged, we recognize here also the zeal of the devil rivaling the things of God, which we find him too, practicing baptism in

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76. Against Heresies, Bk. 3, Chpt. 19:3. (Keble, Five Books of S. Irenaeus p. 283).

77. On Prescription Against Heretics, Chpt. VII, (The Writings of Tertullian, Vol. II, p. 9).

78. Winslow, Religion and the Roman Empire, p. 244.

> his (subjects). What similarity is there? The unclean cleanses! the ruiner sets free! the damned absolves! 79

Being scornful of pagan influences, Tertullian did not generally make use of Orphic parallels to the figure of the Christian Good Shepherd as other writers did.[80]

Hippolytus, a third century theologian in Rome, compares Christ, the Good Shepherd, with the image of Jacob as the prefigurement of Christ and thus uses the Unifier/Shepherd to link Christianity and Judaism. In his commentary on the Psalms, Hippolytus treats the theme that Christ, as Shepherd, has many kinds of sheep in his care — that is both Jews and Gentiles. He comments further, that some sheep traditionally seen as Christ's may in fact be given over to another shepherd, if they are deemed not worthy.

> Now in a spiritual sense, there are some sheep belonging to Christ, and others belonging to the Egyptians. Those however, which once belonged to others may become His, as the sheep of Laban became Jacob's; and contrary wise. Whichever of the sheep, moreover, Jacob rejected he made over to Esau as a reprobate and unworthy of the spiritual Jacob. The singleminded are the sheep of Christ, and these God saves according to the word; "O Lord, Thou preservest man and beast.[81] They who in their folly

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79. On Baptism, Chpt. 5 (The Writing of Tertullian Vol. I, p. 236).

80. Rather than appeal to pagan imagery, Tertullian, as a good lawyer, attempts to show that Christianity is of a very high social order like the reputable associations in established towns, and not like the disreputable and sometimes illegal political organizations. He uses terminology that would be familiar to pagans, showing Christian practice to be disciplined and not licentious (Apology 39). He then goes on to say that Christianity is greater than social clubs and pagan philosophies because it goes beyond them in its commitment to philantropy. He states that some recognize Christianity as a philosophy because it practices what philosophers practice, namely "innocence, justice, patience, sobriety and chastity." See Wilken's "Collegia, Philosophical Schools, and Theology", p. 285.

81. Psalm 36:6.

> attach themselves to godless doctrine, are the sheep of the Egyptians, and these too are destroyed by the hail. 82

The Good Shepherd as the savior of both Jews and Gentiles is seen in Hippolytus' commentary on Genesis. Here he refers to both groups being gathered together into one flock by the Unifier/Shepherd:

> In saying, then that he, namely Zebulun would inhabit a territory bordering on the sea, he plainly confirmed that, just as if he had said that in the future Israel would mingle with the Gentiles, the two peoples being brought together into one fold and under the hand of one chief Shepherd, the good (Shepherd) by nature, that is Christ. 83

In his treatise on David and Goliath, Hippolytus comments on David as a prototype of Christ. He describes David as the human lad who cares for the flock of his father, Jesse, similar to the way Christ, the Son of God and true Shepherd, cares for His flock.

> Hic puer (lit. puer homo) erat et pascebat gregem Jesse patris sui, sicut Christus puer-factus e Patre erat et puer-factus (lit. puer-fiendo) ad sanctos ut-pastor verus a Patre apparecit. 84

In this work Hippolytus tells the reader that the story of the young David is given so that all might see the prefiguring of the "justum pastorem", and through the Just Shepherd learn to glorify the Father.[85] In his commentary on the Twenty-third Psalm, he relates the Lord and Shepherd

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82. Commentary on Psalm 77-78, 48, in Hippolytus Bishop of Rome, Vol. I, Ante-Nicene Christian Library p. 429.

83. Commentary on Genesis 49:12-15, (Hippolytus Bishop of Rome Vol. I, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, p. 412).

84. Treatise on David and Goliath, 5:1, in G. Garitte, "Trate's d'Hippolyte sur David et Goliath, sur le Cantique de catiques et sur l'Antechrist", Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium Vol. 264, 1965, p. 4.

85. David & Goliath, 11:5, (CSCO, p. 14).

to salvation coming through the action of the Holy Spirit in the redemptive work of the Son of God.[86]

In Hippolytus' writing, the Good Shepherd is prefigured in Old Testament characters such as Jacob and David. He is seen as the Shepherd who gathers and saves his flock, and he is seen as judge over the flock, turning the unworthy sheep over to another agent where they will meet destruction.

Shifting focus from the western Church to the eastern Church one finds that the writings of Clement of Alexandria draw heavily on his pagan background for apologetical purposes. Clement was a student of Greek pagan religion before becoming a Christian. He held the best in Greek thought in high regard, and after his conversion to Christianity he used much of the language of pagan religion in his own writing.[87] Tollington writes that like St. Paul, Clement "seeks to win conviction by reminding his hearers or readers that their own poets knew the truths he is trying to enforce."[88] Wilson states that Clement claimed that philosophy was a "divinely ordered preparation of the Greeks for faith in Christ, as the law was for the Hebrews."[89] Clement made extensive use of Orphic imagery in attempting to show that pagan writers prefigured Christianity.[90] An example of this is seen in

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86. Commentary of Psalm 23 in "Hippolytus zu den Psalmen XIX Ps. 22(23)", Die Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drie Jahr hundrerte, Band I, 1897, p. 146.

87. Tollington, Clement of Alexandria Vol. II, p. 238.

88. Tollington, Clement of Alexandria Vol. I, p. 174.

89. Wilson, The Writings of Clement of Alexandria Vol. I, p. 14.

90. Tollington, Clement of Alexandria Vol. I, p. 172.

the Miscellanies where Clement writes on the theme that Orphic writing shows God as ineffable and beyond human understanding.

> And again Orpheus, the theologian, aided from this quarter, saying: "one is perfect in himself, and all things are made the progeny of one," or "are born"; for so also is it written. He adds: "Him no one of mortals has seen, but He sees all." 91

Clement does not fail to assert the superiority of Christianity over paganism, however. In his Exhortation to the Heathen, he calls for the pagans to abandon heathen mysteries in favor of the true mysteries of Christ. The appeal of Christ over Orpheus is seen when he describes Orpheus as "a Thracian, a cunning master of his art", who "tamed the wild beasts by the mere might of song." He goes on to say of Christ: "What my Eunomos sings is not the measure of Terpander, nor that of Capito, nor the Phrygian, nor Lydian nor Dorian, but the immortal measure of the new harmony which bears God's name — that new, the Levitical song."[92] Clement says that the Thracian Orpheus and others deceived men and led them to idolatry, but that Christ frees men from idolatry, figuring the Divine Word as a song which tames the most savage beast of all — man.[93]

Following Clement of Alexandria, Origen developed the combination of pagan thought and Christian belief more fully, in what Bettenson calls "the first synthesis of philosophical

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91. Miscellanies, Bk. V, Chpt. 12, (Wilson, Vol. II p. 267). This theme is continued in Book V, especially in Chapter 14.

92. Exhortation to the Heathen, Chpt. 1, (Wilson, Vol. I, p. 18). Compare Psalm 96:1 and 98:1.

93. Ibid. p. 19.

theology."[94] Celsus, an Epicurean, attacked Christianity as a superstitious false religion, claiming the Greek philosophy and ancient tradition including the writings of "inspired theologians" such as Orpheus were superior to Christian writings.[95] Refuting this, Origen asserts the superiority of Christianity over paganism, pointing out the benevolence of God Incarnate:

> And he (Celsus) could have observed one "descent" distinguished by its great benevolence, undertaken to convert (as the scripture mystically terms them) the "lost sheep of the house of Israel", which had strayed down from the mountains, and to which the Shepherd is said in certain parables to have gone down leaving on the mountains those "which had not strayed".[96]

Celsus states that Orpheus, whom he claims to have been a divinely inspired man and martyr, would be a better model to emulate than Jesus.[97] Origen's reply is that Orphic teachings are no better than any of the other pagan teachings, none of which are worthy of support:

> In regard to Orpheus, what does he admire in him to make him assert that, by common consent he was regarded as a divinely inspired man, and lived a noble life? I am greatly decieved if it is not the desire which Celsus has to oppose us and put down Jesus that leads him to sound forth the praises of Orpheus; 98

Discussing the terms Abba and Father used together in Mark, Augustine points out that Christ draws together Jews

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94. Bettenson, Early Church Fathers p. 21.

95. Chadwick, Origen: Contra Celsum p. xvi. This theme occurs four different times in Book I.

96. Against Celsus, Bk. 4, Chpt. 17 in Crombie, Writings of Origen Vol. II Ante-Nicene Christian Library, p. 177.

97. Against Celsus, Bk. 7, Chpt. 53 (Crombie, p. 476).

98. Against Celsus, Bk. 8, Chpt. 54 (Ibid.)

and Gentiles. He uses the figure of the Unifier/Shepherd quoting John 10:16 (other sheep I have), after which he says:

> But in that passage He goes on immediately to add the declaration, "Them also I must bring that there may be one fold and one Shepherd." and so we may say that, just as the phrase "Abba, Father," contains the idea of (the two races) the Israelites and the Gentiles, the word "Father" used alone, points to the one flock which these two constitute. 99

The second "response-theme" is the Good Shepherd as a Christological figure. This usage of the Shepherd figure is primarily found in the later writings of the third and fourth century Fathers as a means of illustrating Christological views. In this case the Good Shepherd demonstrates the struggle of the Church at this time to understand the nature and reality of Christ. Tertullian, in arguing against the views of Marcion that Christ is not the "Son" of the Old Testament God, states that the Good Shepherd of Luke's Gospel can be nothing but the "Son" of the Old Testament creator. He makes the argument that both the lost sheep and the lost coin of the parables can only be "lost" in relation to their original owner. Therefore the seeker of the lost sheep (Christ) can be no one but him who is and always was the Creator.

> Since then, man is the property of none other than the Creator, He possessed him who owned him; He sought him who lost him; He found him who sought him; He rejoiced who found him. 100

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99. The Harmony of the Gospels: Bk. III, Chpt, V:14, in The Works of Augustine Vol. VIII ed. Marcus Dods (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1873).p. 384.

100. Against Marcion, Bk. IV, Chpt. 32, in Peter Holmes The Five Books of Quintus Sept. Flor. Tertullianus Against Marcion, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, p. 314.

Writing against the heresy that there is no distinction between Father and Son, Tertullian refers to Christ as the Shepherd to whom the sheep are given by the Father.

> Then, again concerning His sheep, and (the assurance) that no man should pluck them out of His hand, He says, "My Father which gave them to me is greater than all;" adding immediately, "I and my Father are one." 101

Athanasius, writing on this same basic theme states that both the Father and Son co-extend the love and salvation of God to mankind.

> ... to admit and introduce us to the knowledge and intuition of the Father's Glory; to render and exhibit himself our sanctification, our Life, our Door, our Shepherd, our Way, our King, our Govenour and Guide, our Savior, our Light and Glory: 102

It is interesting to note that the figure of the Shepherd in the preceeding quote is only one of a list of titles for Christ. In De Synodis, Athanasius provides a statement of faith which restates the basic Nicene belief, and which includes a description of Christ, again listing the Shepherd along with other titles for Christ, including "God from God", "Lord from Lord", and"true light, way, truth, resurrection, shepherd, door".[103]

Writing on the names of Christ in the work of the Cappadocian Fathers, Lossky finds the idea that God reveals himself to man in a series of theophanies, the ultimate form of which is Jesus Christ. The names of Jesus includ-

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101. Against Praxeas, Chpt. 22,(The Writings of Tertullian, Vol. II, p. 383).

102. Oration Against the Gentiles 47 in S. Parker, St. Athanasius, Four Orations Against the Arians and his Oration Against the Gentiles, Vol. II (London, Oxford Press, 1713) p. 359.

103. De Synodis 23,(Migne, P.G. Vol. 26:721C4).

ing that of the Shepherd, are a means by which man may draw closer to the overall reality of God in Christ.

> The ladder of cataphatic theology which discloses the divine names drawn, above all, from Holy Scripture, is a series of steps, up which the soul can mount to contemplation. 104

Augustine writes that Christ has charge over all of creation, even over the angels, using the Lucan parable of the Lost Sheep.

> For if we take the one lost sheep to be the human soul in Adam, since Eve even was made out of his side, for the spiritual handling and consideration of all which things this is not the time, it remains that, by the ninety and nine left in the mountains, spirits not human but angelical, should be meant. 105

The omnipotence and omnipresence of Christ is demonstrated by Augustine in a discussion of the figure of Christ as both Shepherd and Door. Raising the rhetorical question of whether or not these terms are mutually exclusive, he replies that mystery is of the essence of Christ — that transcendence is his basic nature.

> I am the Good Shepherd: and what is the door by which Thou, Good Shepherd enterest? How then art Thou all things? In the sense in which every thing is through Me. 106

Patristic usage of the figure of the Good Shepherd has been shown to have consisted in the themes associated with the work of the Shepherd including Teacher, Redeemer, and Judge, and in themes of theological significance including

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104. Vladimir Lossky, The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church (Cambridge & London, James Clarke & Co. Ltd. 1957) p. 40.

105. Commentary of Psalm 8, Chpt. 12, Expositions on the Book of Psalms Vol. I, Library of Fathers of the Church p. 69).

106. Commentary on Psalm 87, Chpt. 3, (Ibid. Vol. Iv, p. 215).

ing unification and christological illustration. Taken chronologically the Shepherd figure is most often figured as Teacher, Unifier and Redeemer in the first and second centuries. These figures give way in the third century to more frequent use of the Judge figure while christological illustrations predominate over the other themes in the fourth century. As demonstrated especially by Athanasius and the Cappadocians, the Shepherd figure comes to be one of several titles for Christ listed together in a mystical litany illustrative of the expanding christological views characteristic of this era.

Patristic Use of the Figure of the Shepherd in Subsidiary Themes

As was previously stated, a second Patristic use of the Shepherd figure is in relation to subsidiary themes. These themes include: the Shepherd's Flock, and the Shepherd's Successors. Each of these themes is closely related to the figure of the Good Shepherd in one sense or another.

The first subsidiary theme to be considered is that of the Shepherd's Flock. Obviously, there can be no Good Shepherd without a flock. The flock has been assumed in all of the previous discussion, but one finds that the flock as a specific figure itself comes to be more and more important in Patristic writing as one moves into the fourth century.

Beginning in the late first century, Clement uses the figure of the Sheep as an image of God's people as he directs the Corinthians to:

> Learn to be subject; laying aside all proud and arrogant boasting of your tongues. For it is better for you to be found in the sheepfold of Christ little and approved, than to appear superior to others, and to be cast out

of his hope.[107]

The Epistle of Barnabas, which authorities date variously as late first or early second century,[108] gives a Christian reinterpretation of Old Testament prophecy. The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and the scattering of the Flock is seen as symbolic of the vain hope of the Jews who have rejected Christ:

> Again it was revealed that the city and the Temple and the people of Israel were to be given up. For the scripture saith, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the Lord will deliver up the sheep of his pasture, and their sheepfold and tower to destruction."[109] And so it happened as the Lord had spoken. 110

Ignatius uses the theme of the Shepherd's Flock to warn against false teaching which is poisonous pasture. This is the imagery of the Shepherd's care and feeding of the flock.

> I exhort you therefore (or rather) not I, but the love of Jesus Christ, that ye use none but Christian nourishment; abstaining from all strange pasture,[111] which is heresy. 112

Clement of Alexandria combines the theme of the Shepherd's

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107. Epsitle to the Corinthians, 57 (Chevallier, p. 42). Chevallier claims that the phrase "out of his hope" ἐκ τῆς ἐλπίδος αὐτοῦ should be ἐκ τῆς ἐπαύλιδος or "out of his fold".

108. For example Roberts and Donaldson show Barnabas as having been written c. 100-150. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church gives a date of c. 70-100.

109. Although these words do not actually occur in Old Testament Scripture, they reflect the spirit of the fifth chapter of Isaiah and especially of Jeramiah 25:34: "Howl ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves (in the ashes), ye principal of the flock: for the days of your dispersion are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel."

110. Epistle of Barnabas, Chapter 5 (Roberts and Donaldson, Apostolic Fathers p. 108).

111. βοτάνη — Compare with Ignatius' use of "poison of heresy" in Ephesians 10 and Philadelphians 3.

112. Epistle to the Trallians, 6 (Chevallier, p. 81).

Flock with the figure of the people as Children, saying that all who follow Christ are the "Children of God".

> And when He says, "Let my lambs stand on my right,"[113] He alludes to the simple children, as if they were sheep and lambs in nature, not men; and the lambs He counts worthy of preference, from the superior regard He has to that tenderness and simplicity of disposition in men which constitutes innocence. 114

Hippolytus uses this same basic imagery to typify those sheep who stray from the pasture; who refuse to accept the care and feeding given to them. He warns that they will discover to their peril that they have come into the wrong flock.

> They who in their folly attach themselves to godless doctrine, are the sheep of the Egyptians, and these, too are destroyed by the hail, And whatsoever the Egyptians possess is given over to the fire, but Abraham's substance is given to Issac. 115

Within the theme of the Shepherd's Flock is the use of the figure of the flock as a symbol of unity. Origen writes on this idea, saying that Christ unites all under his teaching.

> We are all one body and one sheep; one is a foot, another a head, another something else; but the shepherd has come and gathered bone to bone and joint to joint and having made them one has carried it to his place. Unity comes through love and truth and good-will. 116

Cyprian also treats the concept of unity by using the image of the Flock. He is especially concerned that unity be maintained in his absence from his diocese and that the flock be properly cared for.

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113. Matt. 25:33.

114. The Instructor, Bk. I, Chpt. 5, (Wilson, Vol. I, p. 123).

115. Commentary of Psalm 77-78, 48, (Roberts and Donaldson, Hipp. Bp. of Rm. Vol. I, p. 429).

116. Jeremiah, Fragment XXVIII, (Smith, Ante-Nicene Exeg. Vol. IV, p. 129).

> In the meantime let the poor be taken care of as much and as well as possible; but especially thou who have stood with unshaken faith and have not forsaken Christ's flock, that, by your diligence, means be supplied to them to enable them to bear their poverty. 117

Cyprian uses the theme of the Shepherd's Flock a number of times in his writing with a special emphasis on maintaining unity and fortitude in times of trial and persecution.[118] He also writes that the flock should emulate the innocence of sheep.

> We ought to remember by what name Christ calls his people, by what title He names His flock. He calls them sheep, that their Christian innocence may be like that of sheep; He calls them lambs, that their simplicity of mind may imitate the simple nature of lambs. 119

Augustine uses the imagery of the Shepherd's flock extensively, and in his writing it is possible to see what is perhaps one of the fullest developments of this theme. Augustine states that from the beginning, the sheep have belonged to God for in fact he created them, and therefore they owe their very existence to Him.

> But our Lord made us; therefore the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand, are the very sheep which he hath deigned by his grace to create unto Himself. 120

In the Commentary on the Twenty-third Psalm, Augustine

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117. Letter Five, to the Presbyters and Deacons, (Wallis, Vol. I, p. 21).

118. Cf. Cyprian: Letter 6, to Rogatianus & the Presbyters & other Confessors, 1; Letter 7, To the Clergy Concerning Prayer to God, 1; Letter 37, To Caldonius, Herculanus and Others about the Excommunication of Felicissimus, 1; Letter 43, To the Roman Confessors, (Wallis Vol. I, pp. 23, 27, 103, & 118 respectively).

119. On Jealousy and Envy:12, (Wallis Vol. II, p. 46).

120. Commentary of Psalm 95: 11, (Expositions on the Book of Psalms Vol. IV, p. 394).

provides an extended discussion on the theme of the Church as the flock, and Christ as the Shepherd.

> The Church speaks to Christ: the Lord feedeth me and I shall lack nothing. The Lord Jesus Christ is my Shepherd, and I shall lack nothing. 121

In this commentary, Augustine describes the "refreshing" waters of Baptism, and the feeding and nourishing of the faith in "fresh pastures". Included in his imagery is the Shepherd as Redeemer, and Judge, but the central focus is the image of the Church figured as the Shepherd's Flock.

Augustine uses the image of the Flock as a unifier of all sorts of people, when he writes that both Jews and Gentiles are gathered together in the Flock of faith which will then be judged by him. Quoting John 10:16, "I have other sheep which are not of this fold", and Matthew 15:24, "I have not been sent but to the sheep which have strayed of the house of Israel", he goes on to say:

> For also there shall be congregated before Him all nations, and he shall sever them as a shepherd the sheep from the goats. 122

One of Augustine's variations on the theme of the Shepherd's Flock is the flock as a new Israel:

> And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, that there may be one fold and one Shepherd." The Christian people then is rather Israel, and the same is preferably the house of Jacob; for Israel and Jacob are the same. 123

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121. Commentary on Psalm 23, (Exposition on the Book of Psalms Vol. I, pp. 166-167).

122. Commentary of Psalm 78:3, (Expositions on the Book of Psalms Vol. IV, p. 45). Note that in the Commentary on Psalm 79:3 he uses the same quotes from John and Matt. in stating that Christ called the Jews in his earthly ministry, and through the Apostles called the Gentiles. This theme appears again in the Commentary on Psalm 97:2.

123. Commentary on Psalm 114:2, (Expositions on the Book of Psalms Vol. IV, p. 276).

He goes on to state that the Jews who rejected Christ have become the sheep of Esau. This concept is developed more fully in his Sermons, where he states that the Jews who rejected Christ have predestined themselves to destruction.[124]

Turning from Jews to heretics, Augustine likens them to rebellious sheep led by false shepherds. Commenting on the Donatists, he writes that they claim falsely to hold teaching derived from Christ.

> And sometimes we come to them saying, "Let us seek the truth, let us find the truth," They answer, "Keep what you have: thou hast thy sheep, I have mine; forebear to meddle with my sheep, for I do not meddle with thine." Thanks be to God; the sheep are mine; the sheep are His! [125]

Relative to the heretics, Augustine also uses the imagery of the Door of the Sheepfold to figure the heretics as thieves and robbers.[126]

A final example of Augustine's use of the Shepherd's Flock is in relation to the mission of the Flock. He states that as Christ the Good Shepherd sought the Church as sheep, so the Church must seek the heathen and bring them to salvation. Speaking to the heathen he says:

> We seek you for this reason that you perish not: we seek you because we were sought; we wish to find you because we have been found.[127]

Part of the imagery of the flock is associated with the

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124. Sermon 48:4, 5, & 6, in Library of Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers Vol. VII, ed. Philip Schaff, (New York, Christian Literature Co., 1888) p. 267.

125. Commentary of Psalm 22: Exposition II, 31, (Expositions on the Book of Psalms Vol. I, p. 164).

126. Commentary of Psalm 96:3, (Expositions on the Book of Psalms, Vol. IV, p. 401).

127. Sermon 71:21,(Schaff, Vol. VII, p. 56).

Shepherd feeding the new members of the flock, the lambs, with milk. Milk is a form of imagery having roots in both pagan and Jewish tradition.[128] Milk stands for feeding by revelation or the teaching of the Divine Logos, while the mature or "adult" Christian is feed by the wine or "true Blood" of the Logos.[129] Thus the Good Shepherd milks the Ewe, as Christ or his human representatives the Pastors or Bishops of the Church bring out from the Church the Milk of teaching — the word of God.[130]

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128. Eisler notes the early Christian practice of feeding the newly baptized Christians with milk and honey, and sees Orphic and Jewish roots in this practice. (Orpheus Fisher p. 64). Old Testament origins are seen in Rachel and Leah who are sometimes referred to as the "mothers of Israel" (See also Ruth 4:11). Eisler notes that in Hebrew, Rachel means "ewe" and Leah "wild cow". Rachel is seen crying for her children—i.e. the house of Israel in Jeremiah 31:15 and Matthew 2:18. For Christians, Rachel became a figure of the Church, Bride of Christ and Mother of the Flock. Justin Martyr figures Rachel as the Church and Leah as the synagogue (Dialogue, 134). The newly baptized are sometimes figured as the lambs of the ewe Rachel, the Holy Mother Church "into whose womb—gremium Matris Ecclesiae—they have entered to be reborn into eternity. Cf. the story of Nicodemus in John 3:4-12, also I Peter 5:2-3, Matt. 18:1-6, I Peter 2:2-3, I Corinth. 3:2, and Heb. 5:12.

129. Eisler, Orpheus the Fisher, p. 64.

130. In the time the clergy, as the inheritors of the apostlic tradition, gradually subsumed the role of Shepherd, while the image of Christ became more cosmic. The priestly title ἀρχιβουκολος occurs in Orphic inscriptions and can be compared with the title ἀρχιποιμενος which, for example occurs in I Peter 5:4. One can also compare the Orphic βουκολοι to the shepherds of early Christian communities as in Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." See also Ephes. 5:11. Eisler notes that some may object to Christian priests which are seen as shepherds being equated with Orphic βουκολος or cattleherds, but he points out that early Christian inscriptions sometimes refer to neophytes as vituli lactentes or suckling calves. See also DeWaal's "Milch" in Kraus' Real Encyklopädie der Christlichen Alterthümer, Vol. II, (Freiburgh im Bresigau 1886) p. 394.

Milk imagery and the feeding of the lambs of the Shepherd's Flock is a theme used by several of the Fathers. Irenaeus for example, having shown Jacob as a prefigurement of Christ, refers to Rachel whom Jacob loved:

> But he did all for the sake of that younger one having good eyes, Rachel; the figure of the Church for whom Christ suffered. 131

Similar references can be found in Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Gregory of Nyssa.[132]

One of the clearest milk-related literary images of the Shepherd and His Flock is found in the account of the Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas. Relating a vision Perpetua has had shortly before her martyrdom in the arena, the writer quotes her as saying:

> And I went up, and I saw an immense extent of garden, and in the midst of the garden a white-haired man sitting in the dress of a shepherd, of large stature, milking sheep; and standing around were many thousand white-robed ones, And he raised his head, and looked upon me, and said to me "Thou art welcome daughter." 133

The other major subsidiary theme to be considered is that of the Shepherd's Successors, the clergy. Leaving aside the question of what exactly was the nature of ordained ministry in the early church, the bishops or early Church leaders are figured in Patristic writing as the Shepherd's Successors.

This imagery can be found as early as the writings of

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131. Against Heresies: Bk. 4, Chpt. 21:3, (Keble, p. 377).

132. See also: Irenaeus, Against Heresies: Bk. 4, Chpt. 38:1 & Bk. 5, Chpt. 20:2; Justin M., Dialogue with Trypho:134; Tertullian, to Martyrs I; Gregory of Nyssa, Life of Moses: Bk. II, Chpt. 12; and Clement of Alexandria, Teacher:1, 6, 42.

133. The Passion of the Holy Martyrs Perpetua and Felicitas (Anonymous) Chpt. I:3, (Wallis, Vol. II, p. 279).

Clement of Rome. On the theme that the Apostolic ministry must be revered and maintained, Clement writes to the Church in Corinth, incredulous that anyone should attempt to depose their duly ordained Pastors.

> Wherefore we cannot believe that those who have been ordained properly and duly can be thrown out of their office. ...and who have with all lowliness and innocency ministered to the flock of Christ in peace, and without self-interest, and have been for a long time commended by all. 134

Clement goes on to say that the flock of Christ should be "left in peace with the elders that are set over it."[135]

Ignatius used this same imagery in writing to the Romans of his concern for his flock, leaderless in his absence with God alone for their Shepherd.[136] Tertullian writes that the clergy must set an example for the flock and, following the lead of Christ, be ready even to lay down their lives for the flock: "But it does not become the keepers of the flock to flee when the wolves invade it ..."[137]

As time progressed the roles of the Clergy gradually became more fully defined. In Cyprian's time there seems to be some distinction between priests and bishops although the specifics of such distinctions are still in debate.[138] From Cyprian's time onward the imagery of the Shepherd's Successors

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134. Letter to the Corinthians:44, (Chevallier, p. 33).

135. Ibid.:54, (Chevallier, p. 40).

136. Letter to the Romans:9.(Chevallier, p. 96).

137. Flight in Persecution:11,(The Writings of Tertullian, Vol. I, p. 371).

138. See Maurice Bevenot, "Sacerdos as Understood by Cyprian" The Journal of Theological Studies, Vol. 30, part 2, Oct. 1979, p. 413. The author discusses the use of terminology related to priesthood and how Cyprian seems to designate various forms of ministry, noting some evidence for a distinction between priesthood and the episcopate.

sometimes is associated with Bishops, sometimes is associated with priests and deacons, and sometimes is associated with ministry in general without distinctions. Ball has identified the use of Shepherd and Flock imagery in Cyprian's works, and notes that he uses the image of the Shepherd thirty-four times in his Letters. Ball refers to this usage as being the "metaphor" of the Good Shepherd, but does not distinguish between primary and secondary Shepherd themes.[139] In point of fact, the examples she cites are almost all that of the clergy as Shepherds.

Three different uses of the Shepherd imagery can be found in Cyprian's writing. The first is in relation to the duty of the Shepherd's Successors.

> But it is the duty of those placed over them to keep the ordinance, and to instruct those that are either erring or ignorant, that those who ought to be shepherds of the sheep may not become their butchers. 140

In another letter, addressed to the people, Cyprian states that the "presbyters and deacons" have a responsibility to the people to "cherish" and instruct them in the "way of obtaining salvation".[141] A letter from the Roman clergy to the clergy of Carthage, in this same era, reinforces the theme.

> We are unwilling, therefore, beloved brethren, that you should be found hirelings, but we desire you to be good shepherd... 142

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139. Sr. Mary Tarcisia Ball, Nature and the Vocabulary of Nature in the Works of Saint Cyprian (Washington D.C., Catholic Univ. of America, 1946) p. 247.f.

140. Letter 10, To the Martyrs and Confessors:2, (Wallis, Vol. I, p. 41).

141. Letter 11, To the People:2, (Wallis, Vol. I, p. 44).

142. Letter From the Roman Clergy to the Carthaginian Clergy Letter 2, (Wallis, Vol. I, p. 15—Listed as Letter 8 in Oxford edition).

A second use of the Shepherd's Successors imagery in Cyprian is in relation to the authority of the bishops. He warns that there can be only one flock under one shepherd.

> He Himself in His Gospel warns us, and teaches, saying, "And there shall be one flock and one shepherd." And does anyone believe that in one place there can be either many shepherds or many flock? 143

In definding this concept, Cyprian refers to Peter's investiture by Christ, quoting Matthew 16:18-19 and John 21:21 as a rebuttal to schismatics.[144] For Cyprian the authority of Christ resides only in the catholic and orthodox shepherds who maintain his true teaching.[145]

The third use by Cyprian of Shepherd imagery is in figuring himself as shepherd over his people. He writes of his personal grief in the damage done to the flock as a result of persecution.

> I grieve, bretheren, I grieve with you; nor does my own integrity and my personal soundness beguile me to the soothing of my griefs, since it is the shepherd that is chiefly wounded in the wound of his flock. 146

Origen uses the imagery of the Shepherd's Successors in writing that the clergy should follow the example of the Good Shepherd, that through a study of scripture, they may become good shepherds themselves.[147] He notes that it is the duty

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143. On the Unity of the Church: Treatise III, 8, "Wallis, Vol. I, p. 383).

144. Ibid. Treatise III, 4, (Wallis, p. 380). Some of this segment of Treatise III is thought to have spurious additions supporting Petrine superiority. See note relative to this, p. 381.

145. Letter to Magnus on Baptizing the Novatians, No. 75:5, (Wallis, Vol. I, p. 306).

146. On the Lapsed: 4, (Wallis, Vol. I, p. 354).

147. Letter to Gregory: 3, (Crombie, Vol. I, p. 390).

of the shepherds to lead the flock away from danger and to keep them safe.

> You are a shepherd; do you see the Lord's sheep ignorant of their danger, rushing to the precipices? ... Do you not call them back? 148

Relative to the clergy as shepherds, Origen likens them to the shepherds at the Nativity who are given the joyful task of proclaiming the Incarnation of Christ. 149

The occurrence of heresy was a special problem for the early Fathers, and occasioned the use of Shepherd imagery in very specific ways. Athanasius writes that the only true Shepherd's Scccessors are the orthodox bishops. Writing on the theme that the Arian bishop Gregory is not a true bishop of the Church he says:

> Gregory then is an Arian, and has been sent to the Arian party; for none demanded him but they only; and accordingly as a hireling and a stranger, he makes use of the Governor to inflict these dreadful and cruel deeds upon the people of the Catholic Churches, as not being his own.[150]

Athanasius condems the Arians for forcing him to flee his flock using imagery that figures himself as Shepherd.[151] Athanasius as Shepherd is also a figure used by others in referring to his reinstatement over the flock. The Council of Jerusalem writes to the people, referring to Athanasius as their pastor and lord (τὸν ποιμένα ἡμῶν

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148. Joshua: Homily 7, 6, (Smith, Ante-Nicene Exegesis, Vol. IV, p. 129).

149. Commentary on Luke: frag. 38, (Origen, Homelies sur S. Luc., Sources Chretiennes, Les Edition du Cerf, Paris 1962, p. 489). Cf. note on the role of the shepherds at Bethlehem p. 200.

150. Encyclical Letter: 6, in Library of the Fathers Vol. 13, (London, Oxford Press, 1843) p. 9.

151. Apology to Constantine: 26, (Library of the Fathers Vol. 13, p. 176).

καὶ κύριον).[152] They go on to say:

> For ye were as sheep scattered and fainting not having a shepherd. Wherefore the true Shepherd, who careth for His own sheep, has visited you from heaven, and has restored to you him whom you desire. 153

A letter from Pope Julius to the Alexandrians also uses this same imagery.[154]

In writing on the duties of the priesthood, Athanasius again uses the imagery of the Shepherd's Successors. He notes that some have entered into the priesthood without the proper attitude of service to the flock. He goes on to say that the priest is responsible for the people and will be answerable for the discharge of his duties.

> ... that thou mayest win the souls of them for whom thou shalt be answerable, as it is said, "He is answerable for all the flock." 155

In the same work Athanasius also directs his comments to bishops. He states that if they conduct themselves as they should, then "Christ, the chief shepherd and true bishop," will "crown them with crowns, beside Peter, His beloved, and reckon them among the number of the Apostles."[156] Athanasius tells them that as Peter was entrusted by the Lord to be Shepherd over the flock, so they in turn are entrusted by Peter.[157]

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152. Migne, P. G., Vol. 25; 352B3.

153. Apology Against the Arians: Letter of Council of Jerusalem in Behalf of Athanasius, (Library of the Fathers Vol. 13, p. 85).

154. Letter of Pope Julius to the Alexandrians, (Library of the Fathers Vol. 13, p. 81).

155. The Canons: 4, in Wilhelm Riedel & W. E. Crum, The Canons of Athanasius of Alexandria (London, Williams of Norgate, 1904) p. 9.

156. Ibid.: 10, (Riedel, p. 20).

157. Ibid.: 10, (Riedel, p. 19).

Gregory of Nyssa, viewing Moses as a prefigurement of the bishops, the Shepherd's Successors, exhorts the clergy to drive off the teachers of heresy, as Moses drove the wicked shepherds from the wells.[158]

> ... let us with determination scatter the wicked shepherds from their unjust use of the wells— which means let us reprove the teachers of evil for their wicked use of instruction. 159

Gregory makes use of the prefigurement in Moses of the clergy as shepherds in another way as well. He sees in the solitary life of Moses, alone with his flock in the mountains, a vision of the psychological detachment from the distractions of the world which should characterize the clergy.

> In the same way we shall live a solitary life, no longer entangled with adversaries as mediating between them, but we shall live among those of like disposition and mind who are fed by us while all the movements of our soul are shepherded, like sheep, by the will of guiding reason. 160

Augustine notes that a true shepherd in the image of the Shepherd's Successor gains legitimacy only if he is faithful to Christ. Referring to the image of the Good Shepherd in John, he states that the true shepherd comes through the door — Christ. He goes on to figure Peter as the primary model to be followed, quoting John 21:17: "Feed my sheep."[161]

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158. Exodus 2:16-19.

159. Life of Moses: Bk. II, Chpt. 17, (Malherbe & Ferguson, Gregory of Nyssa: Life of Moses p. 58). Malherbe & Ferguson point out that Gregory uses the image of the mind as shepherd of sheep in an image drawn from Philo, whose Life of Moses treats Moses' shepherd experience as a training ground for Kingship. Cf. p. 159, note 24.

160. Life of Moses, Bk: II, Chpt. 18, (Malherbe & Ferguson, p. 59).

161. Sermon 87: on the 10th Chapter of John, Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament by S. Augustine Vol. II, A Library of Fathers (London, Oxford Press, 1855) p. 631.

Augustine finds a powerful image in Peter, noting that Peter's betrayal and subsequent return to Christ is a picture of weakness turned to strength which can be an inspiration to all.

> But if the good Shepherd, who laid down His own life for His sheep, has raised up so many martyrs for Himself out of the very sheep, how much more ought those to contend to the death for the truth, and even to blood against sin, who are entrusted by Him with the feeding that is with the teaching and governing of these very sheep? 162

Augustine goes on to say that the shepherds themselves are sheep to Christ and, furthermore, that Christ himself becomes a sheep to die for the redemption of all. This theme of being subject to Christ's authority is repeated in his commentary on Psalms.[163] In his sermon on the words of John 10:14, "I am the Good Shepherd", Augustine, commenting on the rebellious sheep, the Donatists, calls for all to gather in the fold of the Good Shepherd.

> I exhort you, I beseech you by the sanctity of such nuptials, love this Church, be ye in this holy Church, be ye this Church; love the Good Shepherd, the Spouce so fair, Who deceiveth no one, Who desireth no one to perish. Pray too for the scattered sheep; that they too may come, that they too may acknowledge Him, that they too may love him; that there may be one Flock and One Shepherd. 164

In Patristic writing of the first four centuries one can see extensive use made of the figure of the Good Shepherd. Examples of Patristic writing have been cited which show the Good Shepherd figure being used to illustrate Christ as

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162. Sermon 123: On John 21:12-19, (Schaff, Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Vol. VII, p. 447).

163. Commentary on Psalm 127:3, (Exposition on the Book of Psalms by S. Augustine Vol. VI, Library of Fathers of the Church, p. 20).

164. Sermon 88: On the Words of John 10, (Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament Vol. II, Library of Fathers of the Church, p. 645).

Teacher, Redeemer, Judge, and as illustrations of the unifying power of Christ. The figure has also been shown to have significance in christological discussion. The subsidiary themes of the Shepherd's Flock and the Shepherd's Successors has been seen as well.

There is one other notable use of shepherd imagery dating from this period of time which does not fit with any of the themes covered so far. This is the anonymous work, the Shepherd of Hermas. Although it is possible that the shepherd described as the Instructor in the Shepherd of Hermas may be intended as a figure of Christ, it is somewhat doubtful that that is the case. The New Catholic Encyclopedia refers to Hermas' Instructor as an angel and points out that, as Hermas was more interested in morals than in theology, the christology of this work is extremely confused.[165] Perhaps the most succinct comment on this work is found in Leclercq's article in the Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne: "Le Pasteur d'Hermas? double énigme!"[166] Its authorship is quite controversial and the work has had something of a checkered career; but it is an interesting example of second century imagery.[167] Early in the work Hermas sees a vision with

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165. New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. VI (New York, McGraw Hill, 1967) p. 1074.

166. Henri Leclercq, "Hermas, Le Pasteur" Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne, Vol. VI, part 2, Col. 2265.

167. There has been great controversy over the authorship of Hermas; Origen, Eusebius and Jerome all proposed the Hermas found in the Epistle to the Romans as the author. They naturally regarded the work highly. Tertullian, who saw objectional tendencies of liberalism in the work, rejected its authenticity. A theory that the author was Hermas, brother of Pius the Bishop of Rome, was in vogue for a time. Later it came to be assumed that there was no Hermas, and that the work was anonymous fiction. For discussion

Orphic-like imagery, in which he is miraculously saved from a strange wild beast.

> On this account the Lord has sent His angel, who has rule over the beasts, and whose name is Thegir,[168] and has shut up his mouth, so that it cannot tear you. You have escaped from great tribulation on account of your faith, and because you did not doubt in the presence of such a beast. 169

One is reminded of the legends that portray Orpheus as one who is able to charm even the most vicious beasts.

In the latter part of Book One a shepherd figure appears to Hermas.

> After I had been praying at home, and had sat down on my couch, there entered a man of glorious aspect, dressed like a Shepherd, with a white goat's skin, a wallet on his shoulders, and a rod in his hand, and saluted me. 170

This shepherd figure and subsequent shepherd figures, are ambiguous, and one is never certain of the intent of the imagery. The terms "shepherd" and "angel" are often used interchangeably. Sometimes there is an imagery in the shepherd figures that is somewhat Christ-like, yet the name Jesus Christ does not appear in the work. The shepherd who appears in this section remains with Hermas through the rest of the work, providing council and teaching. He is a shepherd of

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of the origins of Hermas see H. Chadwick, "The New Edition of Hermas", The Journal of Theological Studies new series Vol. VIII 1957, pp. 274-280.

168. This name is variously written as Hegrin, Tegri or Thegri. Some assume the word to be related to ἄγριος — wild or savage; some take it to be "the watchful" as in Dan. 10 and 20; some take it to be the name of of a fabulous lion.

169. Shepherd of Hermas, Bk. I, The fourth Vision, Chpt. 2 (Roberts, Donaldson & Crombie, Writings of the Apostolic Fathers, p. 346).

170. Hermas: Bk. I, 5 (Roberts et. al., Writings of the Apostolic Fathers, p. 347).

wisdom and truth who reveals God's Will through a series of commandments and similitudes.

In the sixth similitude two more shepherd figures appear, including a bad shepherd "an angel of luxury and deceit" that leads the sheep into a life of indolence.[171] There then follows a vision of a shepherd who punishes the wicked sheep, taking them from the joyful shepherd and casting them into thorns and thistles.[172] It is explained that this is the angel of punishment. Later, another shepherd figure is shown pruning a tree. The branches cut off are given to Hermas' shepherd who plants them. As some flourish and some do not, one sees an emerging image of Hermas' shepherd as a shepherd of judgement.[173] The judgement theme is continued in the ninth similitude where the shepherd judges which stones are worthy to be used in a building, which becomes symbolic of the Church.[174]

There is no clear image of the Good Shepherd in the usual sense in the entire work; although shepherds are seen as teachers, judges and, in a sense, as saviors. Direct references to the Biblical image of Christ as Shepherd, such as quotes or allusions to the fifteenth chapter of Luke or the tenth chapter of John are singularly lacking. The subsidiary imagery of the bishops as shepherds is also lacking. The image of Hermas' shepherd as judge somewhat resembles imagery associated with

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171. Hermas, Bk. III, Similitude 6, Chpt. 1, (Roberts et al., p. 386).

172. Hermas, Bk. III, Sim. 6, Chpt. 3, (Roberts, et al., p. 390).

173. Hermas, Bk. III, Sim. 8, (Roberts, et al., pp. 395-404).

174. Hermas, Bk. III, Sim. 9, Chpt. 9, (Roberts et al., p. 413).

Christ, but it is far from conclusive that that was the author's intent.

Replacement of the Good Shepherd by Other Figures of Christ

It has been seen that early Patristic use of the Good Shepherd figure was rather simple and direct, figuring Christ as Good Shepherd under the theme of Teacher, Redeemer, or Judge. It has also been shown that subsidiary themes of the Shepherd's Flock and the Shepherd's Successors appear in early writings. The Church's interpretation of Christ's life and work is illustrated in the unifying image of the Shepherd, especially as applied in apologetic arguments. In the third and fourth centuries, it has been shown, the secondary themes and the newly emerging christological imagery become more prevalent.

The christological concepts of the fourth century did not spring into existence over night. They are the outgrowth of continuous serious speculation which can be traced back to the apostolic age. Speculation about the nature of Christ can be found in the Gospels, themselves.[175] As Cullman has noted, "Early Christian theology is in reality almost exclusively Christology."[176] Doubtless, as Pollard has said, the early Fathers were not fully aware of the theological task which lay ahead, but by the end of the second century John's Gospel had given the Church a terminology to use for both apologetic and catechetic purposes.[177]

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175. Mark 8:27-31.

176. Oscar Cullman, The Christology of the New Testament (London, SCM Press, 1959) p. 3.

177. T. E. Pollard, Johannine Christology and the Early Church (Cambridge, Univ. Press, 1970). p. 49.

Nor is it possible to assume that fourth century christology is derived wholly from Hellenistic or Gnostic influences.

> Syncretistic elements, even myths, were indeed appropriated, but they were subordinated to a christological structure which received its character not from syncretism, not from Hellenism, not from mythology, but from the Heilsgeschichte. It is characteristic of this structure that from the very beginning it centers in a real history.[178]

As Longenecker points out, the center of attention for the early Church was the "redemptive activity of God in the person and work of Jesus."[179]

It is clear, however, that as the Church continued to speculate on the nature of Christ, the way in which he was viewed developed and, in a sense, expanded. Pollard suggests that Athanasius, for example, developed new and expanded concepts of Christ.[180] The early Church used the term Κύριος from an early date, perhaps even prior to Paul's ministry according to Longenecker.[181] Gradually the terms Κύριος and Θεός came to be used together. As these terms came to be associated with Christ, his image increasingly came to have cosmic metaphysical dimensions.[182] As the image of Christ becomes more complex, the figure of Christ as Good Shepherd is seen less in Patristic writing, while the bishops and clergy appear more often as Shepherds.[183]

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178. Cullman, Christology. p. 323.

179. Richard Longenecker, The Christology of Early Jewish Christianity (London, SCM Press, 1970) p. 25.

180. Pollard, Johannine Christology, p. 208.

181. Longenecker, Christology of Early Jewish Christians, pp. 136-141.

182. Ibid. p. 143.

183. Guido Muler's Lexicon Athanasianum (Berlin, Walter De

It is beyond the scope of this study to deal extensively with other literary figures of Christ in use at this time. It must be noted however that other figures do exist, and that some of them become more prevalent as the Good Shepherd figure becomes less prevalent. The major development is that of Christ as Divine Ruler, which includes a combination of the earlier figures of the Philosopher and the Sun God.

Mathew suggests that with the rise of Constantine, Imperial patronage had an effect on the imagery used to represent Christ.[184] It has been suggested by Verdier that there were references associating Christ with the Sun God.[185] Note for example what may be a portion of an early baptismal hymn in Ephesians:

> Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. 186

The cult of the Emperor also seems to be associated with the rise of the figure of Christ as Divine Ruler.[187]

Gruyter & Co., 1952) lists 15 references to ποιμήν (shepherd), of which only three are examples of Christ directly figured as shepherd. Malherbe & Ferguson note in Greg. of Nyssa: Life of Moses, that Gregory sees Christ prefigured in six figures of incarnation, five figures of the cross and one of the blood. In all this symbolism the Good Shepherd figure makes no significant appearance as a figure of Christ. In Augustine's Confessions, the various titles of Christ are listed seven times without the Good Shepherd being included. Cf. Index in Albert Outler, Augustine: Confessions and Enchiridon, London, 1955.

184. Gervase Mathew, Byzantine Aesthetics (London, John Murry, 1963) p. 57.

185. Philippe Verdier, "La Colonne de Colonia Aelia Capitolina et L'imago Clipeta du Christ Helios" Cahiers Archeologiques XXIII, 1974. p. 37.

186. Ephesians 5:14. Note Old Testament usage of a similar nature in Habakkuk 3:4: "And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power." See also Isaiah 9:6.

187. Verdier notes: "Avec le triomphe du christianisme en

In the fourth century the figure of the Good Shepherd is used less often as an image of Christ. More often Shepherd imagery is associated with the clergy while the people are figured as the Flock. At the same time other images of Christ begin to become more prominant, notably Christ as a royal figure. The gentle, humble Shepherd is very different from this regal figure which increasingly becomes aloof and awesome. There is a concomitant interest in christological speculation that also seems to contribute to the shift in literary imagery. As was previously noted, third and fourth century writers will list the various titles of Christ as a means of illustrating and emphasizing his omnipotence and transcendence. It appears that by the beginning of the fifth century, the literary figure of the Good Shepherd is no longer adequate to describe the ever expanding conceptualization of Christ.

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tant que religion d'etat dans l'empire romain, le concept de Christ-Roi s'est base sur le caractere cosmique du pantocrator crucifie." "La Colonne de Colonia," p. 37.

V

PATRISTIC LITERARY USE OF GOOD SHEPHERD THEMES COMPARED WITH VISUAL ARTS USAGE

Ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι μετ' αὐτοῦ, τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ· καὶ συναχθήσονται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἀφορίσει αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, ὥσπερ ὁ ποιμὴν ἀφορίζει τὰ πρόβατα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐρίφων, καὶ στήσει τὰ μὲν πρόβατα ἐκ δεξιῶν αὐτοῦ, τὰ δὲ ἐρίφια ἐξ εὐωνύμων. Matt. 25:31-33

The development of the visual and literary forms of the figure of the Good Shepherd in the early Christian era has been explored; it now remains to compare these two expressions of shepherd imagery.

It must be said at the outset, that comparing Patristic writing with early Christian art is not wholly dissimilar from the famous comparison of apples and oranges. The differences inherent in the two media make any sort of one to one correspondence impossible. However, this is not to say that they are unrelated. They both are a part of the same milieu, and hold in common basic elements rooted in the developing Christianity of the first four centuries.

In regard to the visual arts, there is always a high degree of subjectivity associated with artistic endeavor. As Wittkower has noted "perception is interpretation" and "we are called upon to share in the visual manifestation of somebody else's interpreting activity."[1] As Gardner so well articulated, there is a "language" of art that must be learned and used, in order to understand the art of any period.[2]

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1. Wittkower, Rudolf, Allegory and the Migration of Symbols (London, Thames and Hudson, 1977). pp. 174-178.

2. Percy Gardner, The Principles of Greek Art (New York,

There can be no doubt that some standardization of symbolism characterized the early Christian era. There were common themes, such as the Good Shepherd, that would have had some generally understood meaning. Yet there would have been ample latitude in individual interpretation.

This is to say that as the visual arts and Patristic writing are compared, one must not lose sight of the fact that there are inherent differences between these two forms of expression. Thus drawing precise one to one correspondences is generally not possible. With this caveat in mind, some general comparisons will be made and some tentative conclusions suggested.

Comparison of Patristic Use of the Figure of the Good Shepherd with Early Christian Art on a Chronological Basis

The earliest paintings in the catacombs usually portray the Shepherd as the keeper of souls in the Heavenly Flock. The Shepherd figures in these examples are largely similar in style and execution. The figure is usually of a classical style, in the pose of the criophore, unbearded, with short hair and a short tunic. These figures are simple,

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Macmillian, 1914). p. 1.
Wittgenstein shows that there are certain "rules" which shape ones views, but that these rules change and remain subjective and illusive. "It is not only difficult to describe what appreciation consists in, but impossible." L. Wittgenstein, Lectures and Conversations edited by C. Barrett (London, Blackwell 1966). p. 7. Cassirer states "Instuition and perception also partake of spontanity and not of mere receptivity; they show an ability not only to receive impressions from outside, but also to shape them in accordance with their own specific laws of formation." E. Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms (New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1957) p. 48. This matter is perhaps made even more difficult by what is at least the possibility that early Christian art was at times meant to carry its meaning "hidden" as Mathew has proposed. See Byzantine Aesthetics p. 40.

highly stylized and impersonal. One can see the Cosmic Shepherd, the keeper of the souls, but there is little if any indication of the nature or work of Jesus of Nazareth. As Bevan has pointed out, the first Christian art is meant to be symbolic, and to rise above the mundane, emphasizing the spiritual realm (see illustrations II, III & V).[3]

In comparison, Patristic writing at the close of the first century and the beginning of the second, shows the figure of the Good Shepherd used as Teacher and Redeemer, with the subsidiary themes of the Church as the Flock, and the bishops as Shepherds (the Shepherd's Successors).

The figure of the Good Shepherd in the early examples of Patristic writing is simple and rather general. There is little indication of the life and work of Jesus, and there is no extensive attempt at Biblical exegesis of the Good Shepherd passages.

During the latter half of the second century the theme of the Shepherd as a unifying figure, drawing together the Jews and Gentiles under one Shepherd, becomes prominent. Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Clement all make use of this theme as an apologetic appeal.

Early third century catacomb paintings portray the Shepherd with Orphic overtones which reach an extreme point with the Good Shepherd dressed as Orpheus, playing a lute, and surrounded by animals, (see illustration I). This imagery compliments Patristic attempts to appeal to pagans through the use of the Shepherd as a unifying figure. Wilken sees a relationship between the move to make Christianity more

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3. Edwyn Bevan, Holy Images, (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1940) p. 100.

respectable by describing it as a philosophy, and the use of the Orant and Good Shepherd on Roman sarcophagi of this same period, especially where these two figures are combined with a third figure, that of Christ as the Philosopher.[4]

The figure of the people as Flock continues to be used as an image in the third century. Included in the Vision of Perpetua at the beginning of the third century is a figure which can be interpreted as Christ, who is seen milking a ewe, and who welcomes the martyr to the Flock.

Heretical movements stimulated the Church to struggle to define more precisely the nature of Christ. This, in turn, played a role in developing the imagery associated with Christ. Partly as a result of the tensions brought on by schismatic groups the figure of the bishop as Shepherd became more prominent. The figure of the Judge/Shepherd was used to indicate that Christ would separate the faithful of the flock from the unfaithful who had grazed in the pastures of heresy. In this era the themes of the people as Flock and the Bishops as Shepherds became increasingly more important.

Although in the early third century there were probably a number of small church-houses in existence, virtually the only example of this type of phenomenon extant today is the church-house at Dura-Europos in Syria. In the baptistry of this edifice one finds an interesting early third century painting of the Good Shepherd which is very similar in imagery to the paintings and the sculptures of the Roman

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4. Wilken, "Collegia, Philosophical Schools, and Theology", passim. See also Justin Martyr's Second Apology, Chpt. X and the work of questionable authorship, A Hortatory Address to the Greeks, Chpt. 15.

catacombs.[5] This is an indication that there is an element of uniformity in imagery even in widely separated geographic regions.

Images of the Good Shepherd in the art of the latter part of the third century show more freedom of interpretation, and begin to have a narrative quality. The Shepherd can be seen seated, feeding a dog, in the guise of Orpheus, and "musing" while leaning on his staff.

In third century works Mathew see the beginnings of what will become more fully developed under the Byzantine influence: the "effort to discern and to convey the spirit, the pneuma that is enshrouded in the flesh."[6] He notes that in the third century, "all art forms shift, and it is also possible to trace a new content in the old literary conventions."[7]

The first half of the fourth century yields still further developments in the imagery of the Shepherd. More frequently one finds several shepherds on a single sarcophagus, along with cherubs, and occasional pagan symbols. As noted by du Bourguet, fourth century Christian art breaks many of the links with the classical past. A frozen portrayal of individual figures becomes more apparent, and a foreshadowing of Byzantine "hieraticism and sumptuousness" can be found.[8] Rice also notes this tendency, relating the theological developments of this age to the changes in art:

> Yet change was taking place in the minds of thinking people; efforts to define the new

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5. See Perkins, The Art of Dura-Europos, plate 17 and passim.

6. Mathew, Byzantine Aesthetics, p. 15.

7. Ibid. p. 13.

8. du Bourguet, Early Christian Art, p. 134.

> faith were occupying the thoughts of clergy and emperor alike, as we can see from the findings of the great Councils of the Church.[9]

In the fourth century primary concern is focused on the Christological disputes that shake the Church. The figure of the Good Shepherd is used by Athanasius as a christological illustration, usually in the context of a list of titles for Christ and not as a major single illustration. As noted by Lossky, and Malherbe and Ferguson, lists of the titles of Christ in the fourth century are used for catechetical purposes and as Christological illustrations of the omnipotence and divinity of Christ.[10]

Painting and sculpture in the latter half of the fourth century portray a new expressionistic influence. There is more detail, and dramatic treatment is coupled with a narrative quality. Use of color becomes more expressionistic, facial expressions are emphasized, and there is a tactile quality in evidence. The figure of Christ becomes more complex as He is seen seated reading to the sheep, surrounded by other shepherds and, in the late fourth century, standing on the heavenly mount, surrounded by Apostles, sheep and accompanied by the figure of the Agnus Dei (see illustration IV).

As described by du Bourguet, rudamentary forms of expressionism and mysticism, found in some of the earliest Christian work, become more pronounced and developed late in the fourth century.[11] Rice notes that characteristic of this

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9. David. T. Rice, The Appreciation of Byzantine Art (London, Oxford Press, 1972). p. 1.

10. Lossky, Mystical Theology, p. 40, and Malherbe & Ferguson, Gregory Ny.: Life of Moses, p. 180.

11. du Bourguet, Early Christian Art, p. 208.

influence was the use of rigid frontal poses, harsh color, enlargement of heads and eyes, and distortion of body proportions and perspective. Rice suggests that this technique of representation was encouraged by the writings of the early Fathers.[12]

McMullen sees a shift in the image and role of the philosopher in the fourth century with greater emphasis being placed on the mystical and less on the rational.[13] The development in philosophy of Middle-Platonism and later, Neo-Platonism has been seen by some to have had an effect both on the art and on the religious thinking of Christians in this fourth century era.[14]

While various authorities have noted in early Christian art and thought a similarity to the thinking of Plotinus and the Neo-Platonists, Mathew suggests that rather than a direct influence, mystical Christianity derives from similar, or at least related sources.[15] Mathew states that

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12. Rice, The Beginnings of Christian Art, p. 37.

13. Ramsay MacMullen, Enemies of the Roman Order (Cambridge, Harvard Univ. Press, 1967). MacMullen notes the visual expression of this tendency in the bust of a philosopher (plate II) "...shown at the moment of gnosis, head tilted back, long locks flying, mouth slack. His eyes above all focus attention. They are enormous and visionary." p. 111. Gardner notes that frontality is a major characteristic of mystical art from the very earliest eras, dating back to Egyptian art of 500 B.C. He suggests that the masks of Greek drama are a part of the same phenomenon — an attempt to raise consciousness from the mundane to the ethereal (Principles of Greek Art, pp. 99-108).

14. See du Bourguet, p. 48 on a mixing of oriental mysticism and Platonism. Bevan notes that an early aversion to mystical art in such philosophers as Plato & Porphyry gives way to an acceptance in Plotinus of imagery which will allow the viewer to lift his thought to lofty ideals. (Holy Images p. 65, 75 & 76) See also MacMullen p. 107; Angus, Mystery Religions and Christianity p. 311; and Grabar, Byzantine Painting 2nd ed. p. 39-40.

15. Mathew, Byzantine Aesthetics, p. 20. See also Grabar's Byz. Paint. & Plontin et les origines de Aesthetique.

Gregory of Nyssa, in the Catechetical Orations, gives the beginning of the classical form of Byzantine art when he develops the distinction between the world of mind and the material world — an influence on the visual arts drawn from Middle-Platonism.[16] Gregory of Nyssa's aesthetical sense can be seen in his Old Testament exegesis:

> Abraham is in transient ecstacy in the Book Against Eunomios and it is noted in the Life of Moses that an ardent lover of beauty constantly receives the image of what he longs for; he longs to be filled with an expression of the archetype: "A soul that is enamoured of beauty rises spirally from one reflection to another, through the visible to the invisible." 17

As one sees less frequent use of the Good Shepherd as a figure of Christ in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, one can observe concomitantly an increase in the use of the figure of the Pantocrator, a more mystical image of Christ. Verdier develops the view that Christ as the sun god (in replacement of Apollo, as the sun god) parallels the rise of Constantine.[18] Mathew states that the imperial cult is replaced by the cult of Christ as Heavenly Ruler.

> The conception of the Adoration of the Sacred Purple by the few led naturally to that of the

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medievale p. 39. Mathew notes that there develops a belief in an invisible world of which the material is a shadow, so that "A scene is not a mere representation of something that has once happened, but a mimesis, a re-enactment." p. 1. Modern theologians have used similar language in recent times, for example: Tillich, "The Religious Symbol" in Symbolism in Religion & Culture ed. Rollo May (New York, 1960).

16. Mathew, Byzantine Aesthetics p. 23. See Gregory Ny. Cat. Or. VI: 2 also Gregory Nz. Or. 45-7.

17. Gervase Mathew, "The Aesthetical Theories of Gregory of Nyssa" in Studies in Memory of David Talbot Rice, (Edinburgh, Univ. Press, 1975) p. 221.

18. Verdier, "La Colonne de Colonia." p. 40.

> Adoration of the Sacred Image by the many. As the Principate becomes a Sacred Monarchy, official art becomes a sacred art and the Imperial portrait a cult image. As the Christian Church becomes the religion of the state, Imperial secular art provided the models of its art forms. The enthroned emperor was the prototype of the enthroned Christ, just as the enthroned empress was the prototype of the enthroned Mother of God. 19

The origins of a royal or imperial figure as a replacement for the figure of the Good Shepherd can be seen especially well in the early fourth century mosaics of the Mausoleum of Constantina.[20] The replacement is an accomplished fact in the early sixth century, as seen in the Ravenna Mosaics of San Vitale[21] and San Apollinare Nuovo.[22] On a less monumental scale the same imagery is seen in what is one of the oldest Byzantine icons extant today, the Mt. Sinai icon of Christ Pantocrator, which Weitzmann dates from the early sixth century.[23]

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19. Mathew, Byzantine Aesthetics, p. 57.

20. In the Traditio Legis, Christ with long hair, a long tunic, plain nimbus in a heavenly or paradisical setting delivers the Law to St. Peter (du Bourguet p. 129).

21. Mosaic of Christ Enthroned in the apse of San Vitale, Ravenna. Christ is seated on an ethereal blue disk, dressed in the Royal Purple with gold stripes on each side of His tunic. He holds a rolled scroll in his right hand and a crown in his left hand. He is unbearded but has a cruciform nimbus. He is approached by St. Vitalis who will receive the crown, and who covers his hands with his cloak as a sign of respect (a custom common to the Byzantine Court, Vantaggi, Ravenna pp. 6-30).

22. Mosaic of Christ Enthroned, in nave of San Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna. Very similar to the mosaic in San Vitale, this portrayal of Christ shows him with longer hair, and a beard, seated on a jeweled throne with his hand in a position of blessing (Vantaggi, Ravenna, pp. 46-66).

23. Weitzmann sees in the figure a christological statement on the combining of the human and the divine in Christ. The Monastary of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai, The Icons. (Princeton, Univ. Press, 1976) p. 15 —re: discussion of icon B 1.

For all practical purposes, one can say that the period of early Christian art comes to an end, to be replaced by Byzantine art, in about the middle of the fifth century. One of the last true examples of the early Christian Good Shepherd, is the Mosaic in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna (see illustration VII).[24] The unbearded Shepherd sits in an idyllic landscape surrounded by sheep. He holds a cruciform staff, wears a long tunic, and has a halo. One cannot help but be struck by the comparison of this mosaic with the passage in Matthew 25:31-33.[25] There seems to be a visual fulfillment in this early fifth century mosaic of the Apostolic image. One also can sense the beginnings of a more Royal form of imagery. The contrast between this figure and the early catacomb paintings and sarcophagi sculpture is indicative of the development that has taken place in the Church's conceptualization of Christ, and it parallels to a great extent, the development in Patristic thought from Clement of Rome to Augustine of Hippo.

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24. Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna, (Vantaggi p. 32). Grabar notes that this figure is in many ways a transition, the last of early Christian art, and a foreshadowing of the Byzantine style. "The accentuation, using new methods, of the forms of an ancient prototype as we find in the Mausoleum at Ravenna imparts to this mosaic a majesty and power that were lacking in the pastoral scenes of antiquity," (Byzantine Painting, 2nd ed. 1979, p. 33).

25. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand but the goats on the left." Matt. 25:31-33.

VI

CONCLUSION

ὅτι τὸ Ἀρνίον τὸ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ θρόνου
ποιμανεῖ αὐτοὺς καὶ ὁδηγήσει αὐτοὺς
ἐπὶ ζωῆς πηγὰς ὑδάτων· Rev. 7,17

It has been seen that there was in fact an element of unity or continuity within the use of imagery both in the visual arts and in Patristic writing in the early Christian period. Various themes have been identified and traced and one can see a development in both the visual and the literary figures. These figures reflect the Church's expanding view of the nature and work of Jesus. One can also see a development in the view of the relationship of the Bishops to the Church reflected in both visual and literary imagery.

Although the meaning of the symbolism associated with the figure of the Good Shepherd is complex and manifests itself in a variety of themes, there is a certain degree of order and consistency in its use. Furthermore there is a relationship (although not a one to one correspondence) between Patristic literary use of imagery and the use of imagery in Christian art.

The use of pagan visual imagery in a Christian context can be shown to be related to both catechetic and apologetic activity within the early Church. What happens is, in fact, a blending of Jewish and Gentile traditions, as a part of the process of the formation of the New Testament Church. The new Church has a universal appeal, capable of accepting and assimilating diverse and variant peoples. The Good Shepherd is an ἐίκων of the One who draws together these

variant people. In the final stage of this early period a new image of Christ begins to predominate, and the Good Shepherd is replaced by the Pantocrator.

In summary, there are four points to be considered in viewing the development of Good Shepherd imagery. First it is important to note that from the very beginning the Christian Church was concerned with drawing together Jews and Gentiles in a new synthesis. This meant an immediate and radical departure from traditional Jewish practice and belief as well as a major departure from traditional pagan practice. Inherent in this phenomenon was at least the potential for acceptance of certain facets of Gentile culture, including unprecedented use of the visual arts.

In the Graeco-Roman world a segment of society proved very receptive to monotheism. Many were attracted to Jewish theological views but resistant to Jewish culture. Christianity, more flexible than Judaism, allowed for conversion without the traumatic cultural changes required by Judaism. Consequently the early Church became a synthesis of Judaism and Greek culture. In this gradual synthesis of Jewish and Gentile tradition the Good Shepherd as a figure of Christ had significance for both of these groups, and became an image of unity to which they both could relate. This was not a wholesale acceptance of pagan imagery but the development of a new approach to imagery, representative of the role of the New Testament Church and based on the life and Teachings of Jesus Christ. It was a profound altering of the basic covenantal relationship between God and His people, including all believers, trancending race and culture.

Secondly it must be noted that in the synthesis of Jew-

ish and Gentile influences, the Jewish-Christian literary tradition dominated. Patristic use of the Good Shepherd figure derives directly from Old and New Testament usage. Several examples have been given, showing a proclivity to draw from the literary imagery of Scripture, and especially to utilize the Psalms and the tenth chapter of John. In the beginning, visual arts usage is drawn less directly from scripture and there is a tendency to incorporate pagan imagery. Nevertheless, a notable Biblical influence in painting and sculpture becomes more pronounced with the passage of time.[1]

A third point to consider is the increasing importance of christological speculation. From the Apostolic age on, the nature of Christ was a major interest and concern of the Church at large. The occurrence of varying view points which sometimes resulted in schism and heresy tended to polarize thought around certain points of view or tenets of belief. As speculation became more complex and more detailed, the idea of Christ became more mystical and esoteric. New figures were needed to express the new conceptualization of Christ.[2] As Christ was increasingly seen as an imperial

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1. As was pointed out in Chapter II, the most frequent use of pagan imagery is on sarcophagi which in part at least can be attributed to the commercial nature of sarcophagi manufacture. It is important to remember that the Graeco-Roman world of the first 3-4 centuries had some economic exigencies not totally dissimilar to our own in this modern era. It is also worth note that high level literary speculation is always more in the province of the intellectual elite, who also are usually among the leaders of a group, whereas public use of visual arts tends to have a more general appeal and significance. One might speculate that the ordinary members of the flock were less sophisticated and discerning than their more literary minded leaders.

2. On the development of the mystical image of Christ, see

figure, the Good Shepherd was no longer adequate. The figure was not regal enough. Two events, the acceptance of Christianity by Constantine and the triumph of Theodosius and Orthodoxy, bracket an era in which this imagery came to fruition.[3]

Finally, one must take note of the fact that in a gradual but definite progression of ideas, the image of the Good Shepherd as a figure of Christ gave way to the image of the Good Shepherd as a figure of the Bishops. As was the case in conceptualizing the nature of Christ, so also the concept of the nature of the clergy developed and became more sophisticated as time passed. The controversies within and without the Church had the effect of exacerbating this process.[4] So by the early part of the fifth century, Shepherd imagery was primarily used for the clergy, especially bishops, and seldom was it used for Christ. The bishops became the figures which drew together the variant sheep into one flock.

It is impossible to say what Shepherd imagery meant to the general public in the first four centuries. Obviously

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discussions of the mystical imagery of Byzantine art and its origins in: M. Gough, The Origins of Christian Art, p. 16; R. B. Bandinelli, Rome the Late Empire, p. 287; and T. Torrance, Space Time and Incarnation (London, Oxford Press, 1969) p. 18, and pp. 82-83.

3. Obviously there were political motives in this association of Christ with imperial imagery. Each faction, Orthodox, Arians, et. attempted to further its position by currying court favor. The political dimension is quite obvious in the Ravenna mosaics.

4. It has been argued that the hierarchical structure of the Church and the authority and position of the bishops, came about in the form it did as a direct result of the challenges of heretical movements. On this theme see Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels, (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1980).

it meant different things to different people.[5] Nor is it possible to press too hard for causal relationships. For example it would be simplistic in the absurd to say that the Arian heresy caused the figure of the Pantocrator to replace the figure of the Good Shepherd. Yet these things are not unrelated.

A dichotomy exists in the first century; for a time Jewish and Gentile influences seem to be at odds. By the end of the fourth century however a new synthesis has come about, based on the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth, worshipped by the Christian Church (or the dominant part of it at least) as the Christ — God Incarnate.

The development over the span of the first four and one half centuries, of the figure of the Good Shepherd is a visual expression of the mainstream of Christian thinking. It is neither trivial nor incidental, it is integral to the ethos of what is perhaps the most significant and formative stage in the development of Christianity.

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5. Wittkower has written: "In fact, most works of art are potentially magic as well as aesthetic. An idol may become an object of aesthetic contemplation and vice versa. The Church was always aware of the intrinsic ambiguity of function, and in practice never interfered with it: the same figure of the Virgin will be an idol to the many and a symbol to the few." Cf. Allegory and the Migration of Symbols (London, Thames & Hudson, 1977) p. 187.

ILLUSTRATIONS

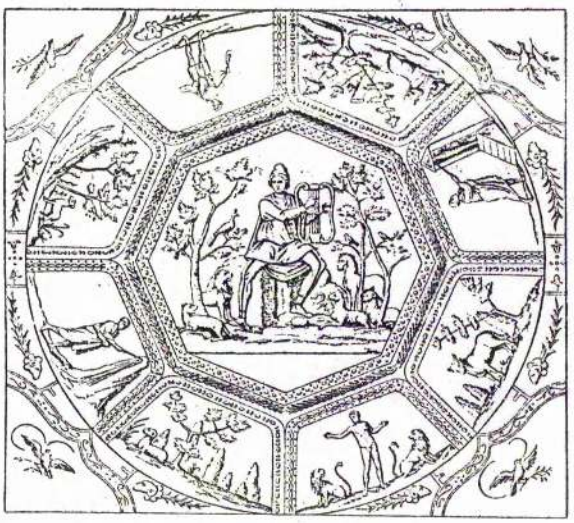

Illustration I, Painting in Ceiling of Domitilla Catacomb

(Eisler, Orpheus the Fisher, plate XXVIII)

Illustration II, Incised Line Monument, Domitilla Catacomb (Dictionnaire d'Archeologie chretienne, illustration 9852)

Illustration III, Bearded Shepherd Sarcophagus, Vatican,
(Deichmann, Repertorium der Christlich-Antiken Sarkophage,
illustration 1)

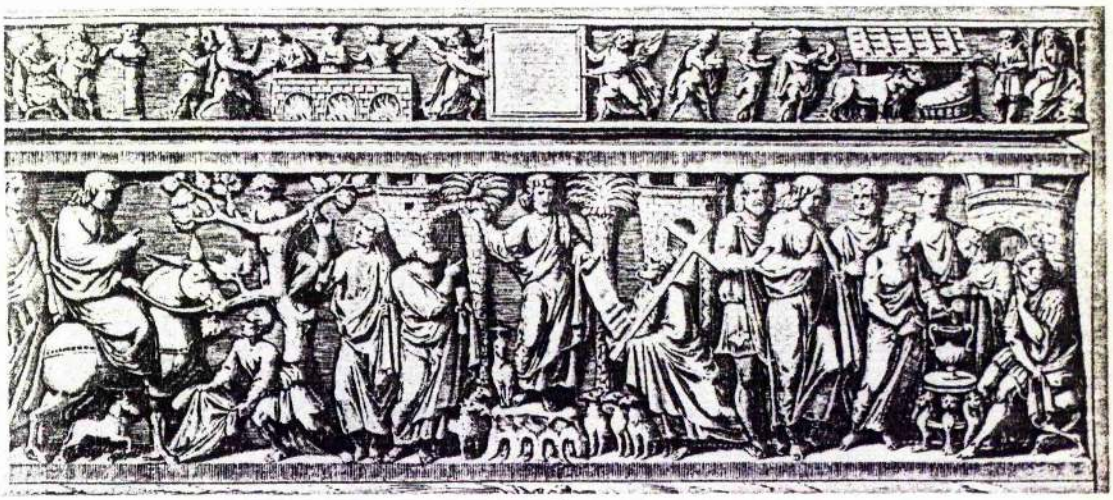

Illustration IV, Reconstruction Based on Fragments of a Late Fourth Century Work (Deichmann, Repertorium der Christich-Antiken Sarkophage, illustration 28)

Illustration V, Painting of the Good Shepherd,
Catacomb of Domitilla
(Dictionnaire d'Archeologie chretienne,
illustration 9875)

Illustration VI, Painting of The Good Shepherd with Milk Pail,
Catacomb of Lucina
(Dictionnaire d'Archeologie chretienne,
illustration 9879)

Illustration VII Mosaic of Good Shepherd
Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna
(Dictionnaire d'Archeologie chretienne
illustration 9898)

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"THE GOOD SHEPHERD THEME IN EARLY CHRISTIAN ART AND PATRISTIC LITERATURE"

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an exploration of the figure of the Good Shepherd in Patristic literature and early Christian art of the first four and one-half centuries. The study focuses on the question of unity and continuity within the imagery of this era and treats the general meaning of the symbolism associated with the Good Shepherd in both literature and art. The relationship of the literary figure to the visual arts figure is examined in regard to various themes in terms of chronological development. As the visual arts figure is largely taken from pagan imagery, the relationship of pagan, Jewish and early Christian imagery is explored.

Early Christian art, primarily that of catacomb paintings and sarcophagi, is discussed briefly and a development of the figure which is progressively more mystical and expressionistic is shown. Patristic writing indicative of the "main-streams" of Christian thought is examined and again a development of the figure is noted. Patristic use of the Shepherd figure is shown to focus on the themes of the Shepherd as: Teacher, Redeemer, Judge, Unifier,, and Christological illustration. The subsidiary themes of the bishops as the Shepherd's Successors and the people as the Shepherd's Flock are also discussed.

It is shown that at the end of the fourth century and the beginning of the fifth, there is a decline in the use of Shepherd imagery to represent Christ in both literary and visual arts usage. Concomitantly there is an increasing

tendency to portray Christ as a Royal figure and to portray the bishops as the Shepherds of God's Flock. This tendency coincides with christological developments within the thinking and teaching of the Church.

Overall it can be seen that the usage of the literary and visual arts figure of the Good Shepherd is related to apologetic and catechetic activity within the Church. It can also be seen that the development of the literary and visual figure represents the growth and development of the Church's concept of the nature and work of Jesus Christ. The Good Shepherd is an εἰκών of the Heilsgeschichte of the first four and one-half centuries of Christianity.